Louis D. Brandeis: Why Liberalism Failed

MAY 28, 1935 10c

New Masses

Can You Steal an Automobile?
Do You Want To Be a Kentucky Colonel?
Join the Fascist "Youth Congress" but—

"Mrs. Roosevelt Will Not Speak!"

Why the President's Wife Cancelled Her Speech:
An Exposé of the Louisville Conference—
and Why It Failed

By JAMES KING

Your Wages and Revolution

By EARL BROWDER

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has tripled its budget —yet kept it balanced

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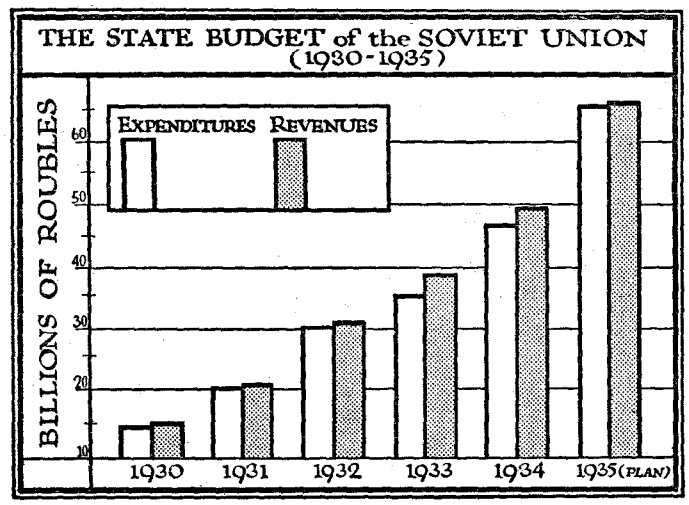

The record at the left is unique among nations. The Soviet Union is the only country in the world which has so greatly increased its budget during these years without incurring a deficit. Moreover, circulation of currency in the past two years has decreased by one billion roubles in the face of a 46% increase in retail trade and a declining price level.

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New Masses

MAY 28, 1935

The Hunger Program

ROOSEVELT has finally told the country what wages will be like under the four billion dollar work relief program. Pay will range from $19 a month for unskilled rural workers in the deep south to $94 a month, the highest figure, for skilled technical workers in New York City. Even the most drastic critics of the huge work relief swindle by which Roosevelt is trying to buy a second term did not anticipate so fundamental an assault on the American standard of living as this. Roosevelt's wage scale, which will of course become a powerful weapon for private employers, would push the American workingman back fifty years and more. Its purpose is to wreck all standards of pay, smash the labor movement and prepare a half-starved, hopeless population for fascism and for war. The Communists, from the first appearance of N.R.A., have called it a "hunger program," and when the country has time to digest the meaning of the latest news from the White House, the truth of that designation will become clear to millions.

Herndon Hearing Denied

THE United States Supreme Court on May 20 denied a hearing to Angelo Herndon, sentenced to eighteen to twenty years on a Georgia chain gang for organizing unemployed white and Negro workers. The adverse ruling was based on the ground of "no jurisdiction," although Justice Cardozo, spokesman for the minority of three, said, "the protection of the Constitution was seasonably invoked and . . . the court should proceed to the adjudication of the merits." Erskine Caldwell, describing conditions in his home state, wrote recently: "Human existence has reached its lowest depths in Georgia." The struggle to organize the workers of Georgia against these conditions was Herndon's only crime. The Georgia authorities had recourse to an insurrection law passed before the Civil War. At his trial Herndon said, "You may jail me; you may kill me. But a thousand Angelo Herndons will come forth to take my place." The case has become internationally famous through the tremendous mass support given to the young Negro defendant. Last summer workers contributed $15,000 toward Herndon's bond and he has since addressed hundreds of meetings all over the country. The International Labor Defense has instructed its attorneys to file a petition for a rehearing.

"I'LL CARRY ON, DADDY—I'LL CUT THEM, TOO!" *Redfield*

The French Elections

THE French working class is achieving a powerful unity. Last year, united front actions by the Communist and Socialist Parties checked fascist raids and caused the fall of the government. An even more important test came with the municipal elections of May 12, when the combined workers' parties polled greatly increased totals in central and suburban working-class districts of Paris and in the provinces. The Communist Party gained eight seats in the City Council of Paris where it had only one before the election and secured control over more than thirty municipalities throughout the country. In France the electoral process requires two ballotings. Unless clear majorities are obtained on the first ballot, a second must be held on the following Sunday between the two candidates receiving the largest number of votes. According to the instructions issued by the Communist Party of France, "if in the first ballot the Communist candidates come in second after the Socialists, we will withdraw our

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candidates on condition that a program of action be agreed on in conformity with the terms of the pact and with a guarantee of reciprocity." The Socialist Party in general declared its loyalty to this rule; but it is noteworthy that the Socialists, who limited their manifesto to the electoral field and the slogan "Town Halls as factors in social renewal," made fewer gains than the Communists, who clearly stated that fascism and war must be opposed by mass struggles, with the ultimate objective of a Soviet France. In the past five years wages have decreased in France from 100 billion francs to 66 billion, militarism has been rampant, the term of military service has been doubled and military expenditures have increased by over 100 billion francs. In the face of these facts, the lower middle classes are much more alive to political issues and thousands of them voted with the workers.

Fighting Filipinos

SINCE the Philippine election, constabulary and vigilantes, backed by the new government who in turn receives support from the U. S. Army, have instituted a man-hunt against peasants who participated in the Sakdalista rebellion of two weeks ago. This uprising of a small "leftist" group turned into a spontaneous revolt of oppressed peasants: now, the "constitutional authorities" have launched a murderous terror. Peasants are shot down in cold blood, over five hundred have been jailed. But shooting and jailing do not remove the causes of discontent: intolerable taxes, high rents, continual exploitation by large owners and landlords. The "independence" granted the Philippines by a generous Uncle Sam reserves the right to tax exports from the islands while the "free" government is expressly forbidden to tax incoming American shipments. Tariffs on other foreign exports to the Philippines give American business a virtual monopoly in the market. Thus the mask of Constitutional Government allows American imperialism all the privileges of exploitation without the disadvantages of the "white man's burden." Against these evils, the Communist Party of the Philippine Islands leads in the struggle to unite the peasant and the industrial worker in the fight for real independence from foreign imperialism—even if it cloaks itself in the resounding title of "Constitutional Government."

Back of the Bonus

BY THE time this issue appears President Roosevelt undoubtedly will have vetoed the Patman Bonus Bill, the Brain Trust will throw its hat in the air, and there will be handshaking in the back room by leaders of the Legion and the V.F.W. Meanwhile certain factors in the bonus fight remain unchanged. (1) There is no longer any question of whether or not the back war wages, long overdue, should be paid, but only how much and by what method. The overwhelming demand of the rank and file veterans, with the support of other sections of the workers, has settled that. (2) The alleged opposition of Roosevelt to the Patman Bill on the grounds of its inflationary provisions is a fraud. The New Deal has already, through devaluating the dollar, raising the price of silver (thus shooting up food costs 35 per cent and lowering real wages) introduced inflation and *will continue this policy*. Vinson, sponsor of the so-called American Legion Bill, said in March, "Although we favor pure money expansion, the administration is opposed to it at this time." Roosevelt actually opposes any kind of payment. (3) Behind the inflationary proposals of Patman is a coalition comprised of certain Wall Street interests (the Committee of the Nation), the National Association of Manufacturers, Frank A. Vanderlip, Father Coughlin, Huey Long, Senator Elmer Thomas, with Senator Borah coming in at the last moment. It is a fascist line-up which, under the guise of devotion to the cause of the veterans, is intent upon mobilizing them against the militant struggles of workers and unemployed.

THOUGH the huge majority of the veterans, organized and unorganized, is united on the demand for payment, a split exists between the leaders of the two major veterans' organizations over the method of payment. During the debate in the House in committee and last week in the Senate, the reactionary leadership of the American Legion and the demagogic leadership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars showed more interest in how the bankers were to be reimbursed than they did in the payment itself. The administration attempted to put through the Harrison Bill, which would have given to a veteran holding a $1,000 certificate, 40 percent of the balance due in the form of bonds and a small cash payment. The bill was laid to rest for the time being when Senator Elmer Thomas, Roosevelt's inflation steerer and friend of bankers, big industrialists and big agriculturalists, introduced an amendment to the Vinson Bill, providing an appropriation of $2,263,000,000. The amendment swung several anti-bonus Senators to the support of the Patman Bill, who placed their confidence in the veto to kill the whole issue at this session. The one method of payment that will not cause additional burdens to the masses, that is, taxation of the rich, was conspicuously absent in debate, though the Veterans' National Rank and File Committee submitted the demand to the Senate Finance Committee April 24, that the "Money be raised by tax levy on incomes of $5,000 a year or over, individual or corporate; on capital surpluses; on inheritances and gifts and on tax-exempt securities." The bonus is a question immediately affecting the living standards of the working class, farmers, small shopkeepers, professionals. Issuance of two billion, two hundred millions in greenbacks will help eventually to skyrocket prices. The future fight for the bonus, should the veto be sustained, will be waged over the rank and file demands: full payment; taxation of big incomes; cancellation and refund of interest.

The Lumber Strike Spreads

WORKERS learned from the West Coast maritime strike last year that A. F. of L. officials must be ousted from strike authority and militant rank and file must control to win. In the Pacific Northwest, 45,000 lumber workers have walked out of mills and camps and are putting this lesson into practice. Abe Muir, executive of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, attempted to slip over a "compromise" which amounted to a sell-out; the strikers turned it down by a vote of 8 to 1. Organizers sent by Muir to several locals have been exposed and in many cases ordered to get out of town—the rank and file in several locals have taken over the conduct of the strike and dispensed with the doubtful "assistance" of bureaucrats noted for their hand-in-glove cooperation with the employers. The move for democratic leadership grows and with it the loyalty of all labor to striking fellow workers. The Federation of West Coast Maritime Unions (formed after the marine strike to further intra-union soli-

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darity) refused to touch lumber from scab mills or camps. With this aid, lumber workers are in a strong position to win demands for a 30-hour week and 75 cents an hour instead of the prevailing rate of 42½ cents an hour. Last week the auto strikers in Toledo lost their strike by allowing the A. F. of L. "leader" Dillon to sell them out under their noses. In the Northwest, workers are adopting a different plan: To trust only the leaders from the ranks and not union executives long since committed to treacherous bargaining with bosses.

A Two-by-Four Patriot

ALDERMAN JACOBS of New York City, ex-school teacher and super-patriot, has been studying his Hearst with zeal. He has introduced an ordinance in the Board of Aldermen which has the full support of the American Legion. It seems that Mr. Jacobs was deeply stirred by threats on the part of big-business alumni of Columbia University to cut off all aid—financial and otherwise—from their Alma Mater because of "Red" activities in the university. Undoubtedly, he has read the terrifying charges of Communism made by that cultured chain-drug-store owner, Mr. Walgreen, against the University of Chicago. He is sponsoring a bill that would definitely prohibit free speech and free assembly in schools and universities, and make illegal all militant organizations involved in the struggle against fascism. The ordinance reads in part:

> No person shall by speech, writing or action undertake any activity in defiance of the rules and regulations of the duly constituted officers and authorities in any educational institution in the City of New York, under supervision of the Regents of the University of the State of New York.

The penalty for any attempt to practice fundamental civil liberties is a fine of $500 and six months in jail. While this ordinance is being pondered, Mr. Jacobs asks for $25,000 to study radical student activities. Both the proposed ordinance and the appropriation are opposed by many organizations including the National Students' League and parent-teacher groups. The appropriation that would squander public funds while relief is cut down can only be prevented by mass pressure from those interested in preserving civil liberties.

Position of the Negro

A THREE-DAY conference has just been held at Howard University on the position of the Negro in our National Economic Crisis. The conference drew two hundred and fifty delegates. They represented trade unions, churches, benevolent societies and professional organizations. They met under the auspices of the Joint Committee on National Recovery (which itself represents some fifty Negro organizations) and the Social Science Division of the University. Among the delegates were a Negro steel worker, a needle-trade worker, a sharecropper and a domestic worker, who told of their position under the New Deal. John P. Davis, executive secretary of the Joint Committee on National Recovery, in opening the conference pointed out that Negroes make up 20 percent of the relief rolls though they comprise but 12 percent of the total population in the United States. (This, in spite of discrimination against them in granting relief.) He went on: "If time can solve the problem of exploitation, both Negro and white, it is time we began to seek a solution. . . . We must not be limited to considering the problem in the present economic system. As feudalism has died, so capitalism may die. . . . Our society must change the emphasis from protection of private property to the protection of human lives."

They Shall Not Die

HILLSBORO — Sacramento — Burlington — Gallup. Month by month the courts backed by lawless officials press their efforts to jail, deport, electrocute and hang militant workers. Against these enemies the working class opposes two weapons: the organization of masses in protest, the never-sleeping legal activities of the International Labor Defense. During this week, while the International Labor Defense girds itself for a new Scottsboro battle, the Alabama lynch-law courts begin all over again their efforts to burn Patterson and Norris. The original indictments against the two boys have been quashed. A gesture toward the United States Supreme Court will be made by placing one Negro on the panel of the grand jury that will re-indict them and probably all the boys. Victoria Price, the purchased "victim," has sworn to a new warrant. "In the end," they say to themselves, "we will beat even the big-wigs in Washington—the dice are loaded." But after five long years of fighting, the I. L. D. once more swings courageously into action. Hundreds of thousands of workers and sympathizers have lent active and financial support. Hundreds of thousands will continue to do so. "The Scottsboro boys shall not die!"

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EDITORS:
SLATER BROWN, MICHAEL GOLD, EUGENE GORDON, GRANVILLE HICKS, ORRICK JOHNS, JOSHUA KUNITZ, RUSSELL T. LIMBACH, HERMAN MICHELSON, JOSEPH NORTH, ASHLEY PETTIS, WILLIAM RANDORF.
WILLIAM BROWDER, *Business Manager*

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Wagner's Anti-Labor Bill

THE contention of President Green of the A. F. of L. and other "labor leaders" that the Wagner Labor Disputes Bill has not the approval of the Roosevelt administration—that it is something separate and apart from the N.R.A. anti-labor setup—that the bill is to the "left" of N.R.A. and the administration policy in general—has been pretty well blasted by recent developments inside the A. F. of L. and its affiliated organizations.

The call sent out by the New York Central Labor Council for the mass meeting in Madison Square Garden on May 23, preceded by what is actually, although not so stated in the official call, a strike of one or two hours duration, puts the A. F. of L. officialdom squarely behind "the N.R.A., the Wagner Labor Dispute Bill and the thirty-hour week (the Black Bill)." (New York World-Telegram for May 16.)

This call to union members to strike, meet and demonstrate for reactionary features of N.R.A. and N.R.A. as a whole shows an intertwining of A. F. of L. officialdom with the government in a fascist network that will paralyze the labor movement if not exposed, checked and defeated.

The Wagner Bill is a second line of defense of the N.R.A. anti-labor and anti-union supporters and the elaborate machinery they have organized for confusing, halting and demoralizing all mass movements for genuine unionism, and for improvements in wages and working conditions. Recent experiences of workers in steel, aluminum, auto parts and textile have shown these purposes more clearly than ever before.

The Wagner Bill does not abolish company unions. Under its provisions, the Board which it authorizes—to be appointed by the President—has the sole authority to decide what union, A. F. of L., independent or company dominated union, shall be recognized. The Bill places new and far-reaching powers in hands of Federal District Courts in enforcing the board's "inquiries" into labor disputes.

Senator Wagner has admitted during the hearings on the bill that it does not outlaw company unionism. He admits freely that it is intended to prevent and stop strikes that "'interfere with or obstruct the free flow of interstate commerce." Furthermore, in a recent controversy with Senator Walsh of Massachusetts (contained in the published proceedings of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor) Senator Wagner interpreted the language of his bill as applying even to strikes of building service workers—such as the recent New York strike. Coupled with the recent decision of the United States Supreme Court on the Railway Pension Act—slamming the door on *all* social legislation of this character—the Wagner Bill is an unmistakable indication of the rapid trend toward fascist reaction in administration circles. No worker should be fooled by the fact that Senator Wagner and A. F. of L. top leaders widely advertise the purported opposition of many powerful employers to the bill. These same people and corporations opposed Clause 7a. Some of them believe that they have enough guarantees from the government *now* to take care of militant labor organizations. They do not even want any more illusions among workers. But, as all history shows, this is not the first time that advisors of capitalists have shown themselves more astute than the actual rulers.

The position of the Communist Party—and the rank and file movement throughout the country for that matter (the New York section of the American Newspaper Guild and other labor organizations have taken the same stand in principle)—was made clear to the Senate Committee on Education and Labor at its concluding hearings by William F. Dunne. The Party demanded:

1. The immediate enactment of the Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill—the so-called Lundeen Bill H. R. 2827.

2. Declaring illegal company unions, and any and all forms of so-called "employe representation."

3. Declaring that the right of workers to organize freely in unions of their choice, without intimidation or coercion by employers and their agents, shall be inviolate.

(a) Specially legalizing the right to strike.

4. Specifically declaring illegal the use of the "blacklist" for the purpose of intimidating workers and preventing union organization or other forms of labor activity.

5. Declaring illegal any interference by employers, their associations or agents with workers' rights of free speech, free press and free assemblage.

6. Declaring specifically that the provisions above shall apply without discrimination to all working people regardless of occupation, sex, race, nationality, religious and political opinion.

7. Specifically declaring illegal any discrimination by employers against Negro workers in the matter of employment, wages and working conditions.

Farmers in Washington

TWO farmer delegations came to Washington last week, to tell the capital what they thought about the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. The first, 4,000 strong, came in Pullman cars and banqueted at the Mayflower Hotel. Well-to-do farmers who had fattened on crop-reduction checks, they were here to make sure they continued getting theirs. President Roosevelt received them, Chester C. Davis, A.A.A. administrator, posed for photographers with his arm round the shoulder of chief big-farmer Edward O'Neill of Alabama.

The second group arrived in three automobiles, fourteen poorly dressed men and women representing the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union and the Sharecroppers' Union, with membership extending over ten southern states. More than half were Negroes. Some of them were in Washington for the third time seeking government action to alleviate their desperate plight, made more desperate by introduction of the cotton reduction program.

They put up, not at the best hotels, but at the homes of sympathizers. Instead of being welcomed on the White House lawn as was the first group, they picketed the Department of Agriculture with signs that read, "We're in rags because we raised too much cotton." "A.A.A. made it worse," "How About the Myers Report?"

President Roosevelt, who a few days before had told the rich farmers that critics of A.A.A. were liars and implied that they represented the high and mighty, had no time to see these sharecroppers and evicted farmers.

Chester C. Davis received them in a conference which (like the subsequent

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ones) was not open to the press. Arkansas sharecroppers, asked him why A.A.A. had suppressed the report of its own investigator Mary Conner Myers who revealed conditions in Arkansas "worse than in Belgium during the famine."

"That was just an investigation of incidents looking toward legal action," said Davis. But he was unable to cite any instance where legal action had been used to force plantation owners to pay the penalties specified by law for violation of cotton-reduction contracts.

"The federal government has no responsibility for enforcing civil liberties." This was Under-Secretary of Agriculture Tugwell's answer when several grey-haired delegates told him they had been driven from their homes by plantation bosses' night riders. One Negro of sixty-seven wore his arm in a sling, paralyzed by a stroke which followed a two-day flight from home. He kept repeating "I've got no place to go."

Neither has the governor of Arkansas such responsibility nor local officials to whom union members have gone for protection from the terror (unleashed since Washington's tacit approval of suppression of the Myers report).

Ward Rodgers, Arkansas school teacher sentenced to six months' imprisonment for activities as organizer for the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, wanted to know where sharecroppers could turn for their rights. Tugwell didn't know. "Don't come to men like me who know your troubles and sympathize," said Tugwell, "go to Robinson and Bankhead and get them to frame legislation that will protect you."

Sharecropper delegates are demanding that the pending Bankhead Bill be amended to make it illegal to attach crop-reduction checks or to assign them to others for payment. Such practice now makes widespread the situation in which tenant farmers never see their cotton-reduction checks, but are forced to sign papers turning them over to plantation owners. The delegation also demands that the new bill guarantee them a decent standard of living and the right to organize into unions of their own choosing.

The sharecroppers are telling their troubles to Miller, chief of the Complaint Section of the Cotton Section of the A.A.A. On the basis of past experience, however, they expect little help from officialdom. "We Negroes and whites have got to organize together to fight for our rights," they say.

Youth in Action

THE exposé by James King in this issue of the sinister schemings of "American Youth Congress, Inc." is instructive and revealing. It should be remembered that the Louisville venture was the fourth attempt to form a mass fascist youth movement. Similar attempts were made by the same clique in New York, in New Brunswick, in Davenport. Each time the progressive youth administered a sound trouncing to the youthful disciples of Hearst and Macfadden.

But the activity of the anti-fascist youth has not been confined to the work of defeating the fascists on their own chosen battlefields. Out of Viola Ilma's ill-fated First American Youth Congress there developed a genuine united front youth movement—the American Youth Congress, which has spread over the United States with the undoubted power of a great mass movement.

Much has been done by the American Youth Congress toward uniting the most diverse types of youth organizations around a clear cut and positive program on the questions confronting the young generation: war, fascism, unemployment, industry, education, Negro rights.

Since last August, when Ilma was defeated in New York by a united front of Socialist, Communist, religious and "conservative" youth, the American Youth Congress movement has dug roots in many cities. Local continuations committees of the American Youth Congress have been set up in New York City, Rochester, Schenectady, Buffalo, Albany, Newark, Patterson, New Haven, Hartford, Providence, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Macoupin County (Ill.), Detroit, Minneapolis, Duluth, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Louisville, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

In the nine months of its existence, the American Youth Congress has become a social and political force. It has to its credit the memorable National Youth Conference in Washington, attended by over 250 delegates, representing 600,000 youth from all parts of the country. This conference besieged President Roosevelt, Robert Fechner of C.C.C. fame, and various state representatives and senators with delegations demanding enactment of H. R. 2827.

It was one of the participating organizations which issued the call for, and helped carry through, the impressive student strike against war on April 12 together with the Student League for Industrial Democracy, the National Student League, the Methodist Youth Council and the Youth Section of the American League Against War and Fascism. Now it is organizing parades and demonstrations against war and fascism for May 30, Memorial Day—in over fifty cities by current count. It is estimated that in New York City alone, upward of 35,000 will parade and demonstrate.

Probably the most ambitious undertaking of the American Youth Congress is its Second American Youth Congress, to be held in Detroit on July 4, 5, 6, 7. Preparations are under way now to bring 2,000 representatives of organized youth to this Congress to summarize the accomplishments of the American Youth Congress movement in the past year, to discuss the program adopted at the First Congress in the light of new developments and the actions recorded above, to clothe the movement in the organizational forms demanded by its rapid growth and influence and to adopt on this basis a Declaration of the Rights of American Youth. The first draft of this Declaration of Rights will be read at a torchlight mass meeting in Detroit on the evening of July 4.

The powers that be are fearful of the strength and potentialities of the American Youth Congress movement in the struggle against growing fascist tendencies. As an opening counterblast the Detroit Board of Education has refused the Arrangements Committee of the Congress the use of Cass Technical High School auditorium for the sessions of the Congress. Protests at this arbitrary denial should at once be forwarded to Mr. Cody, President of the Board of Education, Detroit, Michigan.

Those interested in further details of this Congress may communicate with Waldo McNutt, Chairman of the National Continuations Committee of the American Youth Congress at 112 East 19th Street, New York, or with Marion Gilpin, chairman of the Detroit Arrangements Committee for the Second American Youth Congress, at the Hotel Statler, Room 248, Detroit.

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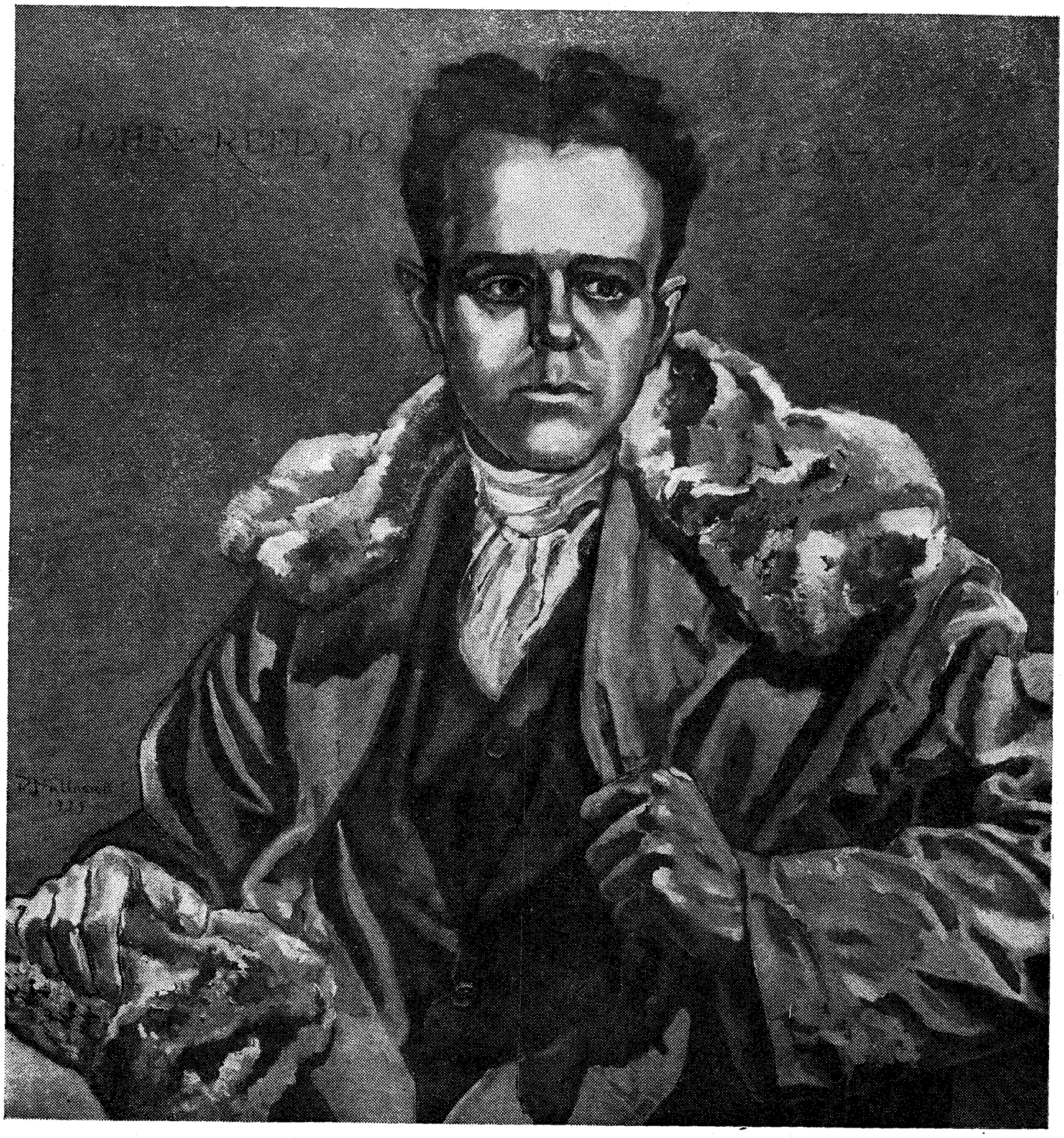

JOHN REED *Robert Hallowell*

John Reed's body rests in the wall of the Kremlin, in Moscow's Red Square; his portrait reproduced above, is now to hang in Adams House, Harvard University, together with pictures of George Washington, John Adams and other leaders of the American Revolutionary War.

A committee of Harvard alumni undertook about a year ago to have the portrait painted. It was executed by Robert Hallowell, Harvard '10, an intimate friend and class mate of John Reed. After ten days of consideration the Harvard authorities have just accepted the portrait.

"As is clear from the personnel of the committee," a letter to President Conant of Harvard, offering the portrait as a gift, stated, "its members hold various political opinions. And it is not the object of this committee to endorse the particular political beliefs of John Reed. Our aim is to honor the memory of an outstanding Harvard man of whom all Harvard men may well be proud."

The committee consisted of Corliss Lamont, '24, secretary-treasurer; Roger Baldwin, '05; Heywood Broun, '10; Robert Hallowell, '10; John Herling, '28; Granville Hicks, '23; Edward E. Hunt, '10; Robert Morss Lovett, '92; Lee Simonson, '09.

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"Mrs. Roosevelt Will Not Speak"

A Report on the Fascist Youth Conference in Louisville

JAMES KING

ON FRIDAY and Saturday, April 19 and 20, there was held in Louisville, Ky., a conference of the American Youth Congress, Inc., Southern Division. On the Advisory Board of this organization, the first name is that of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt. The second is that of Mr. Bernarr Macfadden. The keynote speech for the conference was nationally broadcast by Attorney General Homer Cummings. The whole appeal for the American Youth Congress, Inc. (don't overlook that "Inc.") coincides with a campaign now being waged by the Hearst press.

Also on the Advisory Board are:

The Governors of Kentucky, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Indiana and North Carolina.

Members of the faculties of the Universities of South Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri, Alabama, Florida and Mississippi, Vanderbilt College, Florida College for Women, Rutgers and Centre Colleges.

Among the originally scheduled speakers were Mrs. Roosevelt, Edgar Hoover, head of the Criminal Investigation Division of the Department of Justice, Dr. Walter E. Myer of the Civic Education Service and Mr. Bernarr Macfadden. (Drastic and unexpected changes occurred in the list of speakers.)

Let us have a look at this Conference, sponsored by the President's wife, and see what were the aims and scope of the projected movement, the principles on which it was based and the methods employed to get it under way.

I have here a leaflet written by Samuel Mines, the executive secretary of the American Youth Congress, Inc. The following quotations are from it:

> In its best sense, the word "congress" implies a gathering of minds — an assembly of purpose. . . . youth has a special set of problems . . . [they] must apply themselves to find their own cure.
>
> When the unemployed in the United States passed the ten million mark, it could no longer be said that anyone who really wanted a job could have one. [By writing to Room 802, 1775 Broadway, New York, the reader can secure a copy and convince himself that the above is a quotation, and not a joke. J. K.]

There follows the information that the economic system is out of gear; that youth faces a future of unemployment in a system "so saturated that it could no longer absorb them." Then this:

> It is easy to start a movement by whipping up an emotional frenzy, by a flood of slogans, armbands, flags—by hatred and excitement and violence . . . in America, we want no regimentation, no reign of terror.

And this:

> A youth movement in America must be American in principle. Hence the American Youth Congress. No dictators, no "Fuehrers." Instead, an elected group with equal powers, chosen for fair and balanced representation.

The leaflet goes on to explain that after the Congress at New York University, in August, 1934 (of which more later), an advisory board of older people was selected; for, "While being idealistic it is just as well to be practical." This board has already been referred to. And I may add that Mr. Mines is quite right. Distinctly, this setup is "practical" rather than "idealistic." Of Macfadden, Mr. Mines lyrically writes that he ". . . for many years had been experimenting with self-sufficiency projects for youth, and . . . had the vision to back the first feeble efforts on the part of youth to become self-supporting and self-respecting."

With respect to any sort of a plan of action, Mr. Mines says no word. The printed program for the Louisville Conference, however, is somewhat more explicit. As solutions for the present plight of youth, it proposes mainly the following:

1. A system of apprenticeships.
2. The C.C.C. program.
3. "Opportunities through varied farming and agricultural experiments." That is to say, subsistence projects.

These are the concrete proposals. The rest is wind. (Y.M.C.A.; 4-H Clubs; recreational and educational programs; and similar bilge.)

LET US now examine the methods employed to build up the Louisville Conference. In this connection, it will be nec-

Join the Fascist "Youth Congress" And Become a Kentucky Colonel

STATEMENT OF LOUIS H. LAUKHUF

Commonwealth Of Kentucky
County Of Jefferson.

I, Louis H. Laukhuf am 24 years old, a student of the University of Louisville, and affirm the following:

On April 15, 1935, Colonel Beatty who gave me to understand that he was acting for William E. Porter, who in turn represents Bernarr Mac Fadden, asked me if I would act as a delegate from another university at the Youth Congress. This other University was to be one which I had presumably attended but was not now enrolled in. He offered me and others who would be willing to do the same thing an invitation to the dinner to be given by Governor Laffoon at the Brown Hotel and also two tickets to the meeting of the Congress. A further condition was that I was to make a written statement saying that I would represent such a University that I was not then attending. This I declined to do because even if I had once been a student in another University I would now have no right to pose as its representative. He asked me to give the name of other students at the University of Louisville who could be used in this fashion. This too I declined to do.

Colonel Beatty also offered me the possiblility of a Kentucky Colonelcy in return for agreeing to pose as a delegate from a University which I was not attending.

(Signed) Louis H.Laukhuf

Subscribed abd sworn to before me this April 15,1935. My commission expires August 24, 1937. George J.Gibson Jr. Notary Public, Jefferson County Kentucky.

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essary first briefly to review the Congress of 1934, over which Mr. Mines skims so lightly. Readers of THE NEW MASSES will remember that this Congress was called by Viola Ilma. Those not familiar with her history will do well to look up the issue of THE NEW MASSES of Nov. 13, 1934, in which John Spivak exposed her connections with agents of the Hitler government, and proved that she attempted the formation of a youth group along definitely fascist lines.

At the 1934 Congress, Miss Ilma called together representatives of various groups, and tried to push her program down their throats. But the delegates refused to take it. They organized a united front opposition on the floor; and Ilma, with about thirty followers, had to bolt her own convention, screaming "Reds." The delegates thereupon proceeded to hold a real meeting and organized the American Youth Congress. Ilma and her gang set themselves up on paper, using the same name. This group has subsequently incorporated itself, which is why I have been careful to keep the "Inc." in the title.

It is, therefore, with the incorporated group of neo-fascists that we are here dealing. (Ilma has been dropped.) It is they who "selected" the Advisory Board. It is they who organized the Louisville conference. It is they who sent W. E. Porter and Malcolm J. Freeborn to run the show.

Between the Congress of 1934 and the Louisville Conference of 1935 there are only three points of difference. First: Ilma has been so thoroughly discredited that now not even the American Legion dares to use her. Second: the program advanced at Louisville is a more frankly fascist program than that brought forward in New York. Third: the forces now openly coming forward for this group are far more fascist and far more aggressive than those which in New York attempted to remain in the background. With the advent of Macfadden (pornographer, jingo and Red-baiter), with the acquisition of Chaillaux (who has just finished pushing through the Indiana legislature a bill disfranchising radical and militant minorities, and who made in Indianapolis a vicious attack upon the Methodist Church, the Y.W.C.A. and DePauw University as hotbeds of Communism)—with the arrival of these individuals, the program takes on, with great distinctness, its proper perspective.

Preventing Crime

FOR some while before the opening of the conference, a quiet investigation was carried on in Louisville, directed by Dr. Ellis Freeman of the University of Louisville. Dr. Freeman secured certain affidavits, reproduced with this article. The first affidavit, a statement by nineteen-year-old Clifford Wright of Louisville, declares that after reading The Herald-Post he went to see William E. Porter. Wright told Porter that he had been offered and had declined a job to steal an automobile. Porter, in the presence of a reporter from The Herald-Post, urged young Wright to renew the contact so that the automobile theft ring could be exposed "as an example of the work of the American Youth Congress." Porter proposed that Wright steal the car, a new Ford, replace the Kentucky license plates with Illinois plates which would be given him, drive the car to a place designated by members of the auto-theft ring. The authorities would follow and at the time of delivery would arrest all except Wright.

The police a few days later handed over two Illinois license plates to Wright. But the boy was afraid of the plan. He offered to return the plates to Porter, who refused them; he then returned them to police headquarters, where they were accepted. Wright told Porter he would not steal the car unless he had letters from Porter, The Herald-Post and the police authorizing him to do so. Porter was unable to get these letters, though he offered to give his own personal letter to Wright. This letter was to be placed in the hands of a third party and neither Wright nor Porter could get it without the signature of the other. Wright refused the deal.

We have here an interesting Reichstag fire provocation on a small scale. The idea of this clean, American plan was, of course, to establish a connection between the crime-wave ballyhoo of Mr. Cummings and the opening of the conference to serve as a basis for organizational propaganda. The country is menaced by crime. The Youth Congress dramatically combats crime. Come into the Youth Congress and preserve your country.

Observe the direct tie-up with authority disclosed by this testimony. The scheme involved the direct connivance of The Herald-Post, the city police and the county sheriff.

The second affidavit was given by Louis H. Laukhuf, a student at the University of Louisville. He was asked to be a delegate to the Congress by Colonel Beatty, who gave him to understand that he was acting for William E. Porter, who in turn represented Bernarr Macfadden. He was asked to be a delegate, not from the University of Louisville, but from another university he had supposedly attended. He was offered an invitation to a dinner given by Governor Laffoon the following Saturday and two tickets to the Congress. He declined the offer. Colonel Beatty then asked him to furnish the names of other students who might accept the proposal. Laukhuf refused to do this too. Laukhuf says he was actually offered a Kentucky colonelcy if he would become a delegate from a university he had never attended to the Congress.

This charming little number carries the American principles of the Congress right along. (The reader should refer back to the quotation, from the leaflet by Samuel Mines, especially the pious sentiments about an elected group, fair and balanced representation, etc.)

Mrs. Roosevelt Withdraws

COPIES of the foregoing affidavits were mailed by Dr. Freeman to all the scheduled speakers. Great was the havoc. Mrs. Roosevelt withdrew; Edgar Hoover withdrew; withdrawn was the entry of Dr. Walter Myer; Mr. Macfadden decided to stick to his knitting, the humane task of arousing sympathy for the starving Russian masses. But the show must go on, and substitute speakers were secured. Among these were Homer Chaillaux, head of the Americanism Committee of the American Legion, and Dr. Thos. H. Healy, listed as of the faculty of Georgetown University, also Chairman of the American Legion National Defence Committee. As befits this latter post, Dr. Healy is a man of firm convictions. Although receiving by mail copies of the affidavits, although personally visited by Dr. Freeman and a committee, Dr. Healy took a stand characterized by great firmness and some confusion. I quote from The Herald-Post of April 20:

> He said that Dr. Freeman or anyone else, radical or otherwise, could not cause him to withdraw from the meeting by merely saying it was a radical organization.

Dr. Healy went on to emit a thunderous blast against the American League Against War and Fascism, the National Student League and the League for Industrial Democracy.

> They are Bolsheviks from beginning to end, he said, and their prime purpose is to promote war, not peace.

Mr. Porter and Mr. Malcolm J. Freeborn, already referred to, are members of the elected-by-God-knows-whom Board of Governors of the American Youth Congress, Inc., of which Porter is also treasurer. Porter is also Chairman of the Southern Division. Mr. Freeborn heads a research bureau.

At Louisville, these two are the works.

As delegates to the conference arrived, they were put through a third-degree by Porter. Believe it or not, one question asked was: "How did you find out about this conference?" Then on Friday, April 19, the Congress opened.

Freeborn welcomed the delegates as their chairman. Mr. Porter, no doubt, had elected him. No program was brought forward or discussed, no questions answered. At about 2.30, Porter appeared and announced that the meetings were adjourned until Saturday. Forged credentials, he explained, were swarming all about and there would be no further conference until all had been checked.

It should be stated that at this time, and up until Saturday afternoon, there was present a total of only about sixteen delegates. Eight of them later turned out to be Porter's hand-picked delegates. The other eight or nine were genuine delegates; four from the University of Louisville, one from Chicago University, one from Butler University, one

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from the Indiana University Extension Division, etc. This, Porter evidently felt, would not do.

Friday evening, the Governor entertained at a private dinner those delegates personally selected by Porter. What went on there, I am unable to report; but the care with which delegates were excluded and certain later developments, suggest that it was an occasion for more than speech making.

The following morning, The Herald-Post blazoned forth with headlines announcing that Governor Laffoon planned an investigation of radicalism in the ranks of the Congress. A statement followed by the American Legion Committee sponsoring the meeting which declared that on Friday the Congress had been packed with youths from the Federal Transient Bureau. All this before the conference has done anything whatsoever.

That same morning (Saturday), the convention convened once more. Mr. Freeborn elaborated on a thesis that in apprenticeship lay the salvation of youth—a scheme dear to the hearts of the National Manufacturers' Association, of which Macfadden is understood to be a representative.

Sudden Adjournment

THE next event was a proposal by Mr. Eugene Grueling, delegate from Butler University, that a resolution be passed favoring the extension of democracy from the field of politics to the field of industry. But before the resolution could be voted upon, Porter announced that the meeting was adjourned as the Governor's luncheon was about to begin. Delegates were furious. The conference, which had not a single delegate who in any way represented labor, much less the Negro youth, had been adjourned as soon as a resolution (mild and vague though it was) was proposed from the floor. It was adjourned not only for the morning, but later for the entire conference.

The luncheon, like the dinner, was closed to all but Porter's delegates. At two o'clock the others tried to get back into the meeting room but found it locked. They stormed about, learned that the luncheon was lasting longer than had been expected and the round-table discussion could not be resumed.

At the banquet-hall the delegates were refused admission. At three, they were told that the luncheon was over and now they could come in and listen to speeches.

Mr. Cummings broadcast to the Congress that America is menaced by crime, and youth should organize to combat this. (Unhappily, Porter's stolen car trick had fallen through.) Then Governor Laffoon repeated the substance of Cummings' speech, followed by Chaillaux, Commander of the American Legion. The first part was broadcast and only mildly offensive. The remainder was a vicious spewing of hatred for radicals, militants, foreign born. The melting pot has

How the Fascist "Youth Congress" Tried to Pose as a Crime Prosecutor

STATEMENT OF CLIFFORD WRIGHT

Commonwealth of Kentucky,
County of Jefferson.

The Affiant, Clifford Wright, says that he is nineteen years old, resident with his parents at 1609 Garland Avenue, Louisville, Ky.

Affiant says that on or about April 5, 1935, he went to see one William E. Porter in the Martin Brown Building in Louisville to ask him about the American Youth Congress, about which he had read an article in The Herald-Post. He says that in talking to Porter he mentioned that he had been approached to engage in automobile stealing and that he had declined to participate in such activity. Thereupon affiant says that Porter in the presence of one James Hart, a reporter of The Herald-Post, asked him to renew that contact with the automobile theft ring in order that he might expose such activity, as an example of the work of the American Youth Congress.

Affiant says that Porter proposed that this contact be made and exposure made in the following manner: Wright was to make contact with a member of the automobile theft ring and be accompanied by him in taking a car which was to be left by Porter in front of the Memorial Auditorium in Louisville with the keys in it. This car was to be a comparatively new Ford V-8, which would bring a good price. Wright and his accomplice were to drive the car away and replace the license tags with a pair of Illinois license plates. Later that night Wright and his accomplice were to drive the car to Owensboro or some other place which might be designated by the member of the auto theft ring. Porter, Hart and the proper authorities were to follow and after the car was sold to raid the place. They were to arrest everybody but Wright, who was supposed to be allowed to get away, keeping his share of the proceeds of the car.

Affiant says that on or about April 8 he went to Porter's office and there met two men in plain clothes who Porter said were police officers. Affiant says that these men gave him two 1935 Illinois license plates, which he was to substitute for the lawful plates of the stolen car in the plan hereinbefore described. He says that he took the plates and carried them around with him a day and then took them back to Porter and told him he did not want to take part in the plan. He says that Porter refused to take the plates and told him to take them to police headquarters, which he did. He says that he left them with the officer in charge.

Affiant says that he told Porter that he would not carry through the scheme unless he was given letters by Porter, The Herald-Post and the Police Department, stating that he was employed to work the scheme. Affiant says that Porter called up certain persons, who Porter said were The Herald-Post and the police, and that Porter failed to obtain the letters. However, affiant says, Porter wanted to give affiant a letter himself. Affiant says that Porter wanted to have a third party keep this letter with the agreement that neither affiant nor Porter could obtain the letter without the signature of the other. But affiant says that he refused to deal on this basis also.

Affiant says that Porter then asked him for a written version of his original statement that affiant was approached by an automobile ring and that affiant refused to deal with such a ring. Affiant says that he gave this statement with the understanding that it was to be kept confidential by Porter. Affiant says that notwithstanding this agreement the statement was published in a garbled and incomplete form in The Herald-Post, April 13, 1925.

(Signed) CLIFFORD WRIGHT.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this April 15, 1935.
My commission expires August 24, 1937.
George J. Gibson, Jr., Notary Public, Jefferson County, Ky.

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"collected the scum of the earth." It was time it should become the "boiling pot."

The delegates and representatives of young people's groups drawn by The Herald-Post's blast were getting sick of the farce. Porter formed a group of accredited delegates to draft sentiments of the congress into resolutions. Five members who tried to sit in on the work were ejected, later more were thrown out. Finally, the board of governors, a few delegates and members of the American Legion retired to private quarters. The resolutions meeting adjourned the moment delegates attempted to take part in it.

While all this had been going on, the round-table had reconvened. Grueling again brought forward his resolution about industrial democracy. A delegate immediately assailed him, stating that the gentleman seemed to have no clear idea of what the congress stood for, and demanding his credentials. Grueling was defended by Sara Kasdan, one of the University of Louisiana delegation. In the meanwhile, Porter's group had adjourned, and the room was filling up with governors, Porterites, Legionnaires and God knows whom besides. A Legionnaire now moved to adjourn. Before this could be seconded, Miss Kasdan asked for a point of order. Looking around at the gang that had packed into the room, she said, "I would like to know just how many persons in this room are under thirty!" (The age limit for members of the organization.) Grinning, all the graybeards and baldheads held up their hands. The motion to adjourn was seconded. The delegates raised a terrific protest, but the assemblage of Legionnaires, governors et al., carried an adjournment and the Porter part of the Congress was now at an end.

At this point, I refer the reader back to the Mines quotation, also, to the affidavit of Laukhuf; and again, to the anguished wails of Governor Laffoon and the Legion, concerning "packed meetings."

The delegates at once withdrew and proceeded to hold a genuine meeting. They affiliated to the national group of the American Youth Congress—and not to the "Incorporated" section. They elected as chairman Emanuel Boggs; as vice-chairman, Lamar Hamilton; Sara Kasdan for secretary; and Betty Cohen for treasurer; all delegates from the University of Louisville. It was decided to call a South Central conference, to build a real youth group. Out of town delegates were appointed as chairmen in their home cities, and instructed to return there and proceed with the work of preparing for the conference.

Only one thing more need be mentioned about the events of the conference. The rumpers sent Porter a committee, asking if his group would recognize them. They were, of course, refused. I quote from The Sunday Courier-Journal:

> . . . officials of the group indorsed by the Legion pointed out that the rump session began after the scheduled conference was adjourned officially, and, therefore, had no standing or authenticity, and did not represent the Congress in any way.

After all, they were nothing but delegates.

A Fourth Attempt

THE Congress which I have here reported is not the first, but the fourth attempt, to form with direct governmental support, a fascist youth group.

What does it mean? Why this determination to corral American youth? Well, let's ask ourselves some questions, and then check the answers against revealed facts. Suppose that you wished to lower the national wage-scale? Suppose you wished to bring about a fascist rule? Wouldn't it be helpful, if the young people could be inveigled into working for little or nothing; into joining the militarized C. C. C.; into withdrawing themselves from struggle and marooning themselves on subsistence projects?

With these questions in mind, let us observe that Hearst is carrying on a horror campaign on crime. His pages reek with pictures of people shot down, murdered, etc. But observe his headlines. *Young* murderers. *Youthful* robbers. *Adolescent* criminals. Let us notice that the Attorney General is singing, in modified form, the same tune. Finally, here is a youth movement. Built around what? Around the selfsame theme. And a youth movement backed by business men, by the governors of half a dozen states, by educators, by the Legion; a movement which originally the head of the Department of Justice, the Attorney General of the United States and the wife of the President had pledged themselves to inaugurate.

Upon examination, we find this movement to be based upon what? Upon the real needs of youth, such as the principle of getting an adult's pay for an adult's work, for social insurance, against war, against fascism? Not at all. The program is one of militarization; of poverty; of segregation, hatred, prejudice.

When, therefore, we find such a program as this setting forth the demands of the big industrialists; when we find prominent in it such persons as Macfadden, the ally of Hearst; and the most openly fascist elements of the Legion bureaucracy, as typified by Chaillaux—then we can consider the attempt to organize a group on such a program nothing but an attempt to secure, in American youth, a mass basis for fascism.

As for the presence of Mrs. Roosevelt on the advisory board—certainly, after the complete exposure of Ilma, it is difficult to conceive that a person in the position occupied by Mrs. Roosevelt should wish to continue a relation of sponsorship to the organization, unless we assume that her intent is to foster its growth.

Perhaps the most fatal of all political fallacies is the delusion that fascism develops outside of government; independently of government; in opposition to government. From this fallacy, the history of the three attempts to form a business and governmentally-controlled youth movement should free us. From these experiences there must flow the realization that we are compelled to, the determination that we will, forge a united front of young and old, worker and intellectual, native, Negro and foreign born, so broad and powerful that it will inevitably defeat those groups and those forces now feverishly working towards the formation of a Hitler America.

"Sea Safety" for Fascism

HAYS JONES

LIBERALS expressed plaintive bewilderment when they learned that the Roosevelt program of "sea-safety" did not include fireproof passenger vessels. But it only brought a laugh from the crews who risk their lives on potential Morro Castles. The Roosevelt program doesn't provide fireproof passenger vessels, because these vessels constitute a "Naval Auxiliary" and ships can't very well be naval auxiliaries and fireproof at the same time.

All passenger ships, and most freighters, built in recent years are built to "naval specifications." They are built for the navy to use in time of war. It would cost a lot of money to keep these ships as regular units in the navy and no one would make any profits on them. But as passenger vessels, they can earn their keep and train "auxiliaries" for the naval personnel as well—and help build political fences by giving "worthy" shipowners a lift. That lift is $28,000,000 a year, at present in the guise of "mail contracts" but soon to come out as an "honest" subsidy.

The navy doesn't need ornate "bridal suites," fancy bars and ball rooms, and cubby-holes down below where third-class tourist trade bunks four in a room. The passenger trade does. So the navy specifies hull construction and the construction of magazines and magazine hatches and the layout of the engine room, and leaves the midships a shell that can be subdivided to suit the passenger trade.

The navy also requires "quick convertibility." Its officers boast that the big ships can be made into armed cruisers in a week or ten days. That easy convertibiilty is accomplished by using flimsy wood and wall board for interior partitions—creating firetraps like the Morro Castle. As long as

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ships are built for naval auxiliaries, instead of passenger carriers, this situation will endure. It exists in every capitalist country's merchant marine.

Ships alone do not make a naval auxiliary. "The Navy Needs Men." Wherefore the government is out to produce a "loyal" merchant marine personnel if it has to beat loyalty into their heads with a club, and is getting able assistance from the right-wing labor leaders.

When the Morro Castle burned last September, and later when the Havana went on Mantanilla Reef twenty miles off her course, and the Mohawk swerved off her course and was ripped open by the Talisman—with a total loss of 150 lives—militant seamen predicted that it would be made an excuse for an attack on the seamen's civil rights. They didn't have long to wait. The press and the International Seamen's Union officials blamed the crew for the disasters—overworked and undermanned though they were. The shipowners and the Hearst press screamed "sabotage." The officials of the I.S.U. yelped "smugglers" and "foreigners," although practically all of them are foreign born themselves, and at least one of them was a peddler of smuggled booze in prohibition days. None of these charges was true, but they served the fascist purposes of the government and the shipowners.

Roosevelt's "Eleven-Point Sea-Safety Program" merely confirms these predictions. It provides rigid "examinations" for seamen, rigid naval control over ship construction, and *more stringent discipline aboard ship.*

But the worst point proposed was the "Fink Book." This "continuous discharge book" contains the seamen's picture, name, finger prints and rating, and records his service, ability and character. When he joins a ship the captain takes his book. If he misses the ship or "deserts" (quits the ship before the articles expire) the captain keeps the book and turns it over to the United States Commissioner in the port where the seaman signed on the vessel. The worker loses the only proof that he is a seaman; he is out of the industry, until he can persuade the Commissioner that he is a good dog and "deserves" to sail on ships. If the mate or skipper of the ship chooses to give him a "bad" discharge, it is a blacklist from that time on, and if he uses a bit of ink eradicator to remove the "black" mark, he is "guilty of forgery" and liable to punishment for that. Needless to say, it is a perfect blacklist for use against left-wing seamen, and is so used in countries that now have such "continuous discharge books."

Added to the Fink Book is the Government Fink Hall or hiring hall, which the officials of the International Seamen's Union have advanced to counter the seamen's demand for "all hiring through the union hall." Union officials take the high moral attitude that "the shipowner shall choose his own crew" subject only to the demand that any crew chosen shall pay the usual dues to the union treasury, after having been so chosen.

It is easy to see where all these Roosevelt's eleven points aim to drive the seamen. Like so many bayonets in his back, they are driving him into the war machine and into fascist control over the merchant marine for war purposes. I.S.U. officials and the government seek definitely to abolish the right to strike and substitute for it a "Maritime Board" that will have complete control of wages, hours and the conditions of work, and many other similar "personnel problems."

Although it is impossible for workers and sympathizers in other fields to take any large part directly in the tasks of organizing the seamen against war and fascism, or against the fascist assaults on their wages, working conditions and civil rights, all those who support the workers' struggles can write to the Merchant Marine Committee of Congress, protesting the fascist bills plotted against seamen.

Why They Lost in Toledo

ALFRED HIRSCH

TOLEDO, O.

WHY did the Toledo automobile strike fail? Why did the strikers, whose position throughout was commanding, accept proposals denying them a signed contract and union recognition?

The strike began on April 23. It was precipitated by the fact that the windows of the entire Chevrolet plant were suddenly encased in heavy metal screens during conferences of the workers with General Motors' officials. From that day on not a worker entered the plant.

Loaded railroad cars lay on the adjoining sidings. A blue flag, posted by the railroad company, ironically said "Men at Work" and served to keep railway employes at a safe distance. The automobile strikers pitched horseshoes between the tracks. Neighborhood food dealers, at the request of the strikers, donated supplies to nearby restaurants which prepared meals for the men.

A bulletin called Strike Truth, edited by the Strike Committee, gave straight militant information and instructions to the workers. When the General Motors presented its first settlement proposals in full page ads in all local papers on April 23 and 25, Strike Truth countered with a careful analysis and its own proposals calling, first and foremost, for a signed contract with the union.

Within a week General Motors plants employing upward of 30,000 men, whose work depended on the transmissions produced at Toledo, were closed.

When Francis J. Dillon, A. F. of L. organizer-in-chief for the automobile industry, appeared on the scene the Strike Committee sensed at once that he was not of their generation of militant struggle in the trade unions. To the members of the United Automobile Workers' Federal Labor Union, Local 18384, Dillon, short, fat, ruddy from good living, and well versed in the ways of A. F. of L. officialdom since the days of Sam Gompers, was an outsider.

Dillon, then, was recognized as an inimical factor by the Strike Committee. There was considerably less clarity in the Strike Committee regarding the activities of the Executive Committee of the Union, which includes thousands of workers employed in other Toledo plants. The Executive Committee occupied a middle ground between Dillon and the Strike Committee, in the end playing a decisive role against the strikers.

The strike was becoming so serious a threat that the government, in the person of Edward F. McGrady, Assistant Secretary of Labor, made its entrance.

Suddenly the Independent Workers' Association (spelled Company Union) sprang up, holding a much-heralded meeting in the hall of the Chamber of Commerce. Claiming the support of more than half the workers in the plant, the men assembled at the meeting voted to go back to work on General Motors' terms. Consequently, a vote on the company's proposals under governmental supervision was planned with the assent of the Strike Committee, which, sure of its position, was striving to be "fair."

Strike Truth came out, urging the workers to vote "No" on the proposals which the union had already unanimously turned down almost two weeks before. The allowing of a new balloting on May 8 revealed the latent and eventually fatal weakness in the Strike Committee. But the result, 1261 against the proposals, 605 in favor, actually put the union in a stronger position than ever.

W. C. Knudsen, Executive Vice-President of General Motors, who had previously ignored all requests for negotiations "until the men were back at work," magnanimously consented to a conference with all the strike leaders, to be held under the "impartial" direction of McGrady. On Saturday, May 11, from 9 a. m. until three the next morning, this discussion went on, leading to a new draft of proposals.

Meanwhile, James Roland, chairman of the Strike Committee, had wired all General Motors locals, calling for a gathering to discuss extension of the strike. The Executive Committee of the local, here definitely at odds with the Strike Committee, sent follow-up wires cancelling the meeting and stating that Roland had sent the invitations "without authorization."

Roland had also wired the Flint local, where 30,000 men had been held in check

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by Dillon for ten days, calling on them to join the strike.

Fearing further dead-lock and consequent losses to General Motors, Donald Richberg, N.R.A. chief, made a hurried trip to New York where he sat with Alfred Sloan, President of General Motors. The significance of this visit was not apparent to the Strike Committee which, at that particular time, had it in its power to bring about recognition for every local in the company's many plants.

Following the conference with Knudsen on May 11, it became clear that still another vote, this time on the new proposals, was in order. The Toledo press let loose. Editorials praised the patience of Mr. Knudsen, the perspicacity of Dillon, decried the activities of the "radical" Strike Committee and advised the men to settle. The Toledo Blade stated: "Multitudes of Toledo, while in church, said a prayer that this strike might be ended."

On the evening of May 12, twenty-four hours before the vote, Dillon openly broke with the Strike Committee and made public a wire he had sent to Flint favoring settlement in Toledo and carrying an implication of expulsion should the Flint local strike.

Dillon's statement blazed across the pages of Toledo's newspapers which approved it in first-page editorials. The Strike Committee was in conference, beset with internal difficulties. It issued no counter-statement. Strike Truth did not appear.

Evening brought the meeting. As Dillon entered a boo went up. Ten minutes later he made his exit, purple, his suavity gone, shouting: "They're out! Out of the Federation of Labor. . . . This is the first time this has happened to me in twenty-five years." He left, slamming the door of a taxi.

A motion had been passed granting the floor only to the members of the Strike Committee until after the vote.

Forty-five minutes passed. Dillon returned, smiling, his old self. Roland, bitter as he was against Dillon, had reacted to the threats of expulsion immediately announced by the newspapers in special editions. Still sure of his position, crippled by a sense of "fairness," he had proposed that Dillon come back.

Dillon spoke. His booming voice assured the workers he "was not angry," praised the proposals of General Motors, urged their acceptance. He threatened, he cajoled.

Roland, young and no orator, explained why he stood for rejection. But he added, "It's up to you men. I don't want to influence your vote."

Then, as the ballots were passed, Fred Schwake, Business Agent for the entire Local and a member of its Executive Committee, told the men acceptance was victory. Had not General Motors made concessions? Did not the proposals imply union recognition?

The men were confused. At least 1,500 eligible to vote were present yet only 1,117 ballots were cast: 732 for acceptance, 385 for continuing the strike. Dumfounded, beaten, Roland announced the result. His voice faltered, he realized where his "fairness" led.

Someone said: "I have a feeling inside me like someone in the family just died. . . ."

The strike was over. The crisis, which had held General Motors powerless in the hands of 2,300 workers, was past.

Knudsen of General Motors knows that a strike is class war; in desperation, he sued for peace and won temporary victory:

Because Francis J. Dillon of the A. F. of L. favors class cooperation at the expense of the workers and could state that "the vote demonstrated that the hearts, the hopes, the aspirations of all of us are the same, be we employes or employers";

Because the wavering Executive Committee of the Local finally supported Dillon;

Because the Strike Committee, feeling that strike is class war, lacked experience and political training necessary to fight that war.

Decoration Day

PHILIP CORNWALL

Now old John Brown he said to me
The Negro people must be free.

"Children, be quiet, get into line;
Smooth your dress, Alice,
Anthony, don't fall behind!

"What are you boys doing there in back? . . .
Remember Fort Sumter . . . Merrimac."

He went to Harper's Ferry from Torrington
And he saw a lot of slaves and he told them run.

"Take off your caps. The flags.
The star spangled banner.
The band and the men and the guns.
They fought at Appomattox, Bull Run."

The old men shuffled past in the hot sun.
The Polish workers wearing purple ribbons
Came from the mills to mingle with the living.

Children stirred restlessly, waiting to march
Out to the graveyard, back to the church.

They tell a story of old John Brown
Alone on a mule when he left this town,
For he was a strong man and he was brave
And he went down south for to free the slaves.

They walked in the dust,
They followed the line
On the winding road to the cemetery,
To the graves and the flags and the granite signs
Where Anthony's great-uncle Tom lay buried,
Where the broken bodies and bones interred
Made a hillside lot a Gettysburg

And the withered flags made a sunlit stain
And the broken bodies marched again
Through sun and rain.

John Brown was born up the Naugatuck
And he lived by learning, not by luck.

"Anthony!"

Oh, we'll march through the south
With a fife and a drum
For the day of old John Brown
Will come.

"ANTHONY!"

"I'm coming!"

But my head is bending low.

"Anthony!"

Let my people go.

They went to the river and back to town
With garlands of flowers for the men of the sea
But nothing for old John Brown.

They told at the soldiers' monument
Of four score seven years that went
Before Abe Lincoln at Gettysburg
Spoke of the meaning of the word
To the broken bodies there interred.

They told the tale
Of Memorial Day
But never a word of old John Brown
But never a word of old John Brown.

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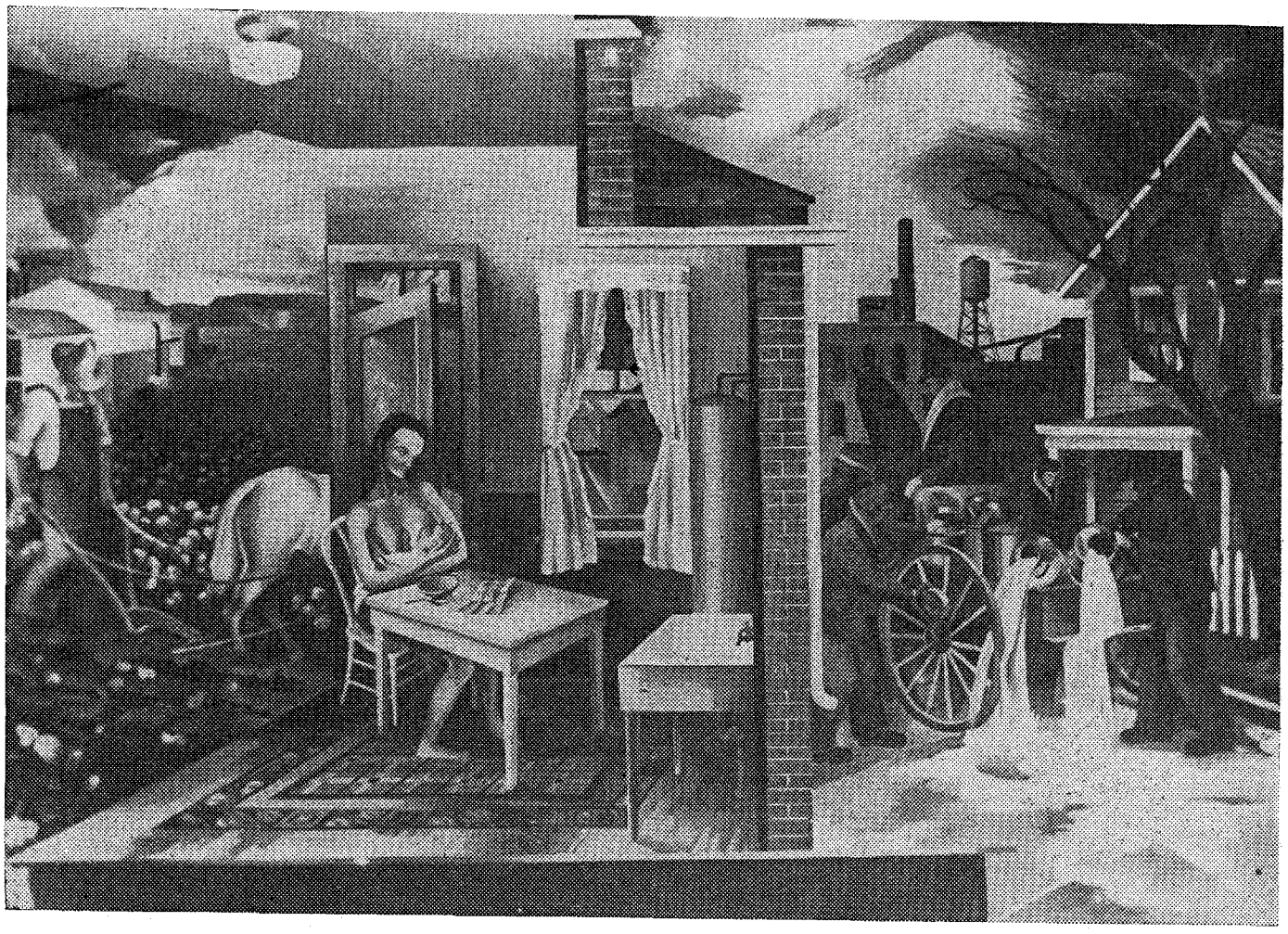
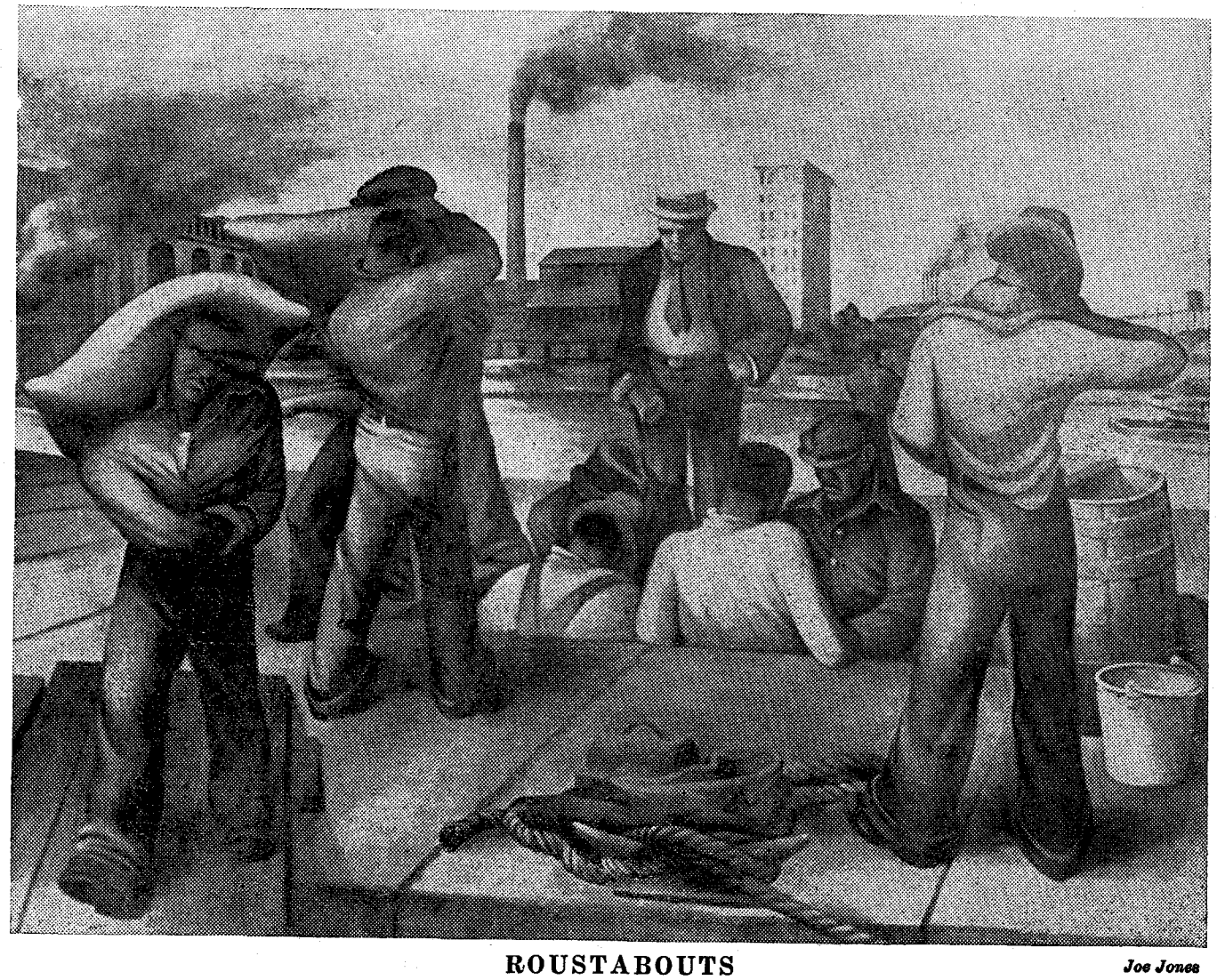


THE NEW DEAL — *Joe Jones*



ROUSTABOUTS — *Joe Jones*

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What Is Communism?

4. Your Wages and Revolution

EARL BROWDER

ONE of our readers has raised a question which, from many directions, in different forms, we have learned to recognize as an old acquaintance. He writes:

> Norman Thomas has said and written many times that the danger of fascism and war is made greater, if not caused, by the ideas and activities of the Communists. He says you *provoke* the capitalists to their reactionary deeds. What have you to say in answer to this charge?

What can we say? What would you, reader, say if you were emerging from the hospital with your head bandaged from the results of resisting a hold-up, and were rebuked for having *provoked* your assailant? Or what would you say, being placed in the position of Bob Minor and David Levinson in Gallup, New Mexico, when the government officials, charged with upholding the "public order," accuse you of having kidnaped yourselves? Or suppose you are one of the Gallup miners charged with murder because the murderers of your brothers also shot down the sheriff?

But let us be "coldly objective" about this question. We will hold our indignation for another occasion. We will try to understand fully the point of view that poses such a question, and find out exactly what degree of truth there is in it.

Do the capitalists and their agents take the path of fascism from some inborn predisposition in that direction? No, clearly not. Are they preparing another bloody war from love of slaughter? No, that is too simple an answer. While there are plenty of fascist types and lovers of war, natural products of a rotting capitalism, yet those who rule, those who hold power, those who give or withhold the orders for the fascist troops and militarists, are motivated by policy, coldly-considered policy. Their policy is directed toward a definite goal. That goal is to restore profits, by driving down wages and living standards at home and taking away foreign markets from rival powers.

If our capitalist rulers could recoup their sinking profits at the expense of the masses, by continuing the old traditional "freedoms," civil rights and democratic machinery, of course they would not turn to "new methods," to fascism. What "provokes" them to fascism? Clearly, it is the resistance of the masses to the increased robbery. They cannot continue to rob successfully in the old way.

Here we find the basis of the theory of "provocation" as the cause of fascism. It arises from the viewpoint of the "humane," "liberal" capitalists who would like to carry on their intensified exploitation in a peaceful, smooth and quiet manner; who are pained and surprised by the resistance of "their" workers; who are "provoked" by this resistance, against their own "good wishes" in the matter, to rally their demagogs, storm troops and underworld gunmen.

Every person who brings forward this argument of "provocation," has adopted, consciously or unconsciously, the viewpoint of the capitalist exploiters.

It is true that the Communist program and activities have one single goal: to organize and make more effective the resistance of the working class and all exploited masses against the capitalist policies of further enriching the rich and more deeply impoverishing the poor. If that is "provocation" of fascism, then make the most of it!

If the workers would not resist, if the capitalists could get the masses to accept their policies so easily and thoroughly as William Green, Matt Woll, John Lewis and Norman Thomas accept them, then the capitalists would find no need for fascism. This argument is, in substance, that we should "defeat" fascism by making it "unnecessary" for the capitalists, by ourselves accomplishing for the capitalists those aims which they otherwise will call upon fascism to reach. It is a kind of scabbing upon the potential storm troops.

So, we find "truth" of a sort in the charge made against the Communists, that we "provoke" our well-intentioned capitalists on to the path of fascism. It is a purely "relative" truth, a class truth, a capitalist truth. It is true, that is, only for those who accept the sacredness of capitalist profits and justify everything necessary to maintain the profit system.

It is equally clear, however, that from the viewpoint of the working class struggle for the right to live, this is the most damnable falsehood. It is only in unrelenting struggle against such "truths" that the working class can free itself from slavery.

It is, by the way, instructive to note how this argument fits into the logical scheme of William Randolph Hearst. That well-known pal of Hitler, Goering and Rosenberg launched his fascist campaign against everything decent in America with a manifesto proclaiming that fascism would come in this country only if we tolerate the Communist movement; in the name of avoiding fascism, he called for the violent destruction of the Communists, the dismissal of every liberal professor from the universities and the muzzling of Norman Thomas himself!

WE COME to the next question from two opposite approaches. One reader reproaches the Communists with endangering the success of the workers' struggles for immediate demands by our revolutionary propaganda; the other thinks we have abandoned the revolution through our energetic struggle for immediate demands, such as the Workers' Unemployment, Old Age and Social Insurance Bill, H. R. 2827.

The first one writes:

> Why don't you Communists keep yourselves out of the current strike situations, where you only paint the strikers "Red," rouse the employers and the public against them, and help to defeat the strike?

The second one comes to the same conclusion from opposite premises:

> The Communist Party, by its participation in strikes for small reforms and by its advocacy of unemployment insurance, is helping capitalism to avoid revolutionary upheaval. The true revolutionist welcomes the worsening of conditions, because only the whip of starvation will drive the ignorant masses to revolt.

Both of these correspondents are 100-percent wrong. From opposite premises they arrive at a common program for the Communists—a program of sectarian isolation. We Bolsheviks have always had to work out our policies in uncompromising struggle against both these points of view. That is what we mean when we talk about the "struggle on two fronts" among the ranks of the workers; it is the struggle against these two ways of paralyzing the working class.

Critic No. 1 wants a "pure and simple" trade-union fight for immediate demands, with the revolutionaries keeping hands off; he thinks this will make success easier and more probable. This theory, however plausible it may have looked in other times, is today clearly absurd when tested by the most simple reference to actual events. Let us compare two outstanding labor struggles of 1934, the first in which "pure and simple" trade union policy prevailed against Communist policy, the second in which Communist advice was adopted and acted upon by the great majority of workers.

The first was the situation of the automobile workers in March, last year; William Green and the A. F. of L. Executive Council dominated the situation, isolated the revolutionists and made a "trade-union" non-revolutionary settlement of the struggle in collaboration with President Roosevelt. In order to avoid the revolutionary consequences of a general strike in the industry, Green and his associates signed the Roose-

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velt pact and the auto code, legalizing the "merit clause" and the company union. The result was the near-destruction of the trade unions, the building of company unions under the direct auspices of the government-appointed Wolman Labor Board and the terrible worsening of the conditions of the auto workers. A year later, Green himself had to denounce the simple continuance of the code, which he himself had signed, as American fascism.

Compare this with the Pacific Coast Marine Workers' general strike, which culminated in the general strike of all San Francisco workers. In this second struggle, it was the revolutionists who isolated the A. F. of L. national officials and prevented them from settling the strike along the line of the auto industry. The struggle was denounced as "Red," as "revolutionary" from one end of the country to the other. Martial law was declared against the strike. But in the end the marine workers were victorious in most of their demands, they built a strong union which entirely eliminated the company unions, and even the San Francisco solidarity general strike resulted in greatly strengthening the whole trade-union movement. From the narrowly practical view of immediate results even, only the policy of the revolutionists "brings home the bacon" for the workers.

Consider, for a moment, the argument of the "ultra-revolutionary" Critic No. 2. (In its purest form this is presented by the Socialist-Labor Party.) Its practical conclusion is exactly the same as that of Critic No. 1, the opportunist; the only difference is, No. 2 puts on a "revolutionary" mask. Both would keep revolutionary ideas out of the day-to-day struggle.

But we Communists declare, and we prove it by experience, that only our revolutionary policies can bring victories for the workers in the day-to-day battles for immediate demands. We reject completely the idea that "The worse are conditions, the better for the revolution." We know that only upon the basis of these daily struggles for bread and a better life can the revolutionary movement be built and prepared for the overthrow of the entire capitalist system. The conclusions from our own experience are supported and deepened by the teachings of Lenin, who led the first successful proletarian revolution.

FROM a number of letters the following related questions are brought together for a common answer:

> Is it not true that the capitalist system is collapsing of its own weight? . . . How does the Communist Party make a revolution? . . . Can a revolution be successful with all the terrible weapons of modern warfare in the hands of the capitalist class? . . . Is it not true that a revolution can arise only out of the ruins of an unsuccessful war? And should not revolutionists, therefore, welcome another war, as the sure road to revolution?

That the capitalist system is breaking down, that it is unable to operate more than a fraction of the existing means of production, that millions of people are thereby condemned to a life of degradation, of slow starvation—these facts are obvious to everyone. But it would be a fatal mistake to conclude from this that the capitalist system will simply "collapse," that the capitalists will surrender their power and that then everybody will get together to build up peacefully some new system. Things don't happen that way. The worse becomes the crisis, the more desperately will the capitalists cling to their power and property, the more murderous will become their attacks upon the masses of the people. Capitalism can only be ended by the organized action of the working class, with the aid of some sections of the middle classes. The revolution does not simply "happen"; it must be "made."

But that does not mean that the Communist Party "makes" the revolution. The revolution is "made" by the great masses of the population; the Communist Party acts as the guide, as the organizer, as the vanguard of these masses; it gives the masses consciousness of their problems and a program to solve these problems.

Further, the transfer of state power from the capitalist class to the working class, which begins the revolution, can be accomplished only under certain conditions which must exist independently of the desires and will of the struggling classes. There must be what we call a "revolutionary situation." Such a situation exists when the ruling class can no longer continue to rule in the old way; when the old economic system can no longer feed the people; when the middle classes themselves are wavering, and a part is turning against the rulers; when the capitalists have lost confidence that they can solve their problems; when capitalist control of the armed forces is being undermined and shaken; and when, therefore, the revolutionary will-to-power of the workers, their heroism, their self-sacrifice and enthusiasm in struggle for the new order, strikes against a ruling class which is already shaken, demoralized and becoming conscious of its own doom. Under the conditions of a revolutionary situation, the Communist Party wins the active support of the majority of the working class, of a section of the middle classes, neutralizes other parts of the population, wins some of the armed forces to its side, isolates the ruling capitalists and then leads the effective majority of the population to the seizure of state power. This is the first step of revolution. The further steps are: the use of this state power to take possession of the means of production, put the masses to work using them in an organized, planned manner —the reorganization of all economy on socialist lines.

So long as the capitalists can retain unshaken the complete control of the armed forces and weapons of warfare, it can defeat the rebelling masses. But a revolutionary situation shakes also the control of the armed forces; capitalists do not fight their own battles; soldiers are closely connected with the masses; they can be, and must be, won for the revolution. *All revolutions have been made with weapons upon which the overthrown rulers had been relying for their own protection.*

A revolutionary situation may arise quite independently of whether an international war is being fought. It is quite true, however, that any serious, large-scale imperialist war today will inevitably bring about a revolutionary situation. But it does not follow that "revolutionists should welcome another war"; exactly the contrary. Revolution arises out of war, not because "revolutionists welcome the war," but because revolutionists fight against that war before it comes with all their power and continue that fight after war breaks out, to transform it into a civil war against the oppressors. It is only the uncompromising fight *against* war, not the war as such, which leads to revolution.

In his fifth article, next week, Earl Browder will discuss "What will the middle class gain from the Revolution?" Readers are invited to send in questions from week to week.—THE EDITORS.

Questions from Readers

EARL BROWDER

Equality in Soviet Russia

Question: Why is there still inequality among the citizens of the Soviet Union, when socialism is supposed to exist there?

Answer: The basic answer to this question was given last week. A general, abstract equality is not the aim of either socialism or Communism. The slogan of equality has meaning only when directed against *discriminations* and *oppressions* of capitalist or pre-capitalist society. "Equal pay for equal work" is, for example, one of the best (and most universal) expressions of the slogan of equality in its real (not abstract) application. But analyze it for a moment and it becomes clear that this also implies the companion slogan, "Unequal pay for unequal work"; the first cannot be realized without realizing the second also. Thus the first and most basic application of the equality slogan is found to presume inequality of individuals; the inequality which is attacked is that which violates the natural inequality of men. Another concrete slogan is "Equality of all nationalities," or "Equal rights for Negroes"; here again, we find the slogan of equality directed against those class-created discriminations which rate individuals, not on the basis of merit, but upon prejudgment of the individual upon other considerations entirely aside from merit. All such concrete expressions of the slogan of equality are fully and completely carried out in the Soviet Union; and it is precisely for that reason that we find there, for the first time in history, the natural inequalities of capacity among men working out to their conclusion

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more and more without distortion of extraneous considerations. Even under Communism there will be nothing approaching the dreams of the equalitarians (those who make a dogma of abstract equality); the socialist rule of reward according to service, which means unequal reward for unequal service, will be replaced by the Communist rule, "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs," which again means inequality among individuals according to their unequal abilities and needs, the difference being that under Communism we can dispense with the mechanical linking up of rewards with services because the greatest reward will have become not material considerations, but precisely the opportunity to serve. An abstract ideal of equalizing all individuals in society is thus seen to be pure utopia. And it is a reactionary utopia at that, because every practical policy based upon this idea turns into an obstacle to reaching or building the socialist society.

Dictatorship

Question: Is the dictatorship of the proletariat the same as socialism?

Answer: No, they are not the same, any more than a strong set of teeth and a good stomach are the same thing as a first-class meal. In both cases, the first thing is necessary to the second. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule of the working class; that is, democracy for the workers to enable them to "dictate" to the capitalists and their agents. This expresses itself in the *state form* of the Soviet government, which is a government of delegates elected from below by the toiling masses, organized in councils or Soviets. Socialism is the result of the policies carried out by this Soviet government, when it has taken the machinery of production into its hands and operates it for the benefit of the toiling masses and not for profit.

"Primitive Communism"

Question: Is there anything in the Communist movement of today which is similar to and would identify it to some extent with the kind of Communism which used to be the social order before and during the patriarchial period in human history?

Answer: The Communist society toward which we are striving has certain points of identity with primitive communism, together with extremely important points of difference. Common to both is the non-existence of classes, the sharing of labors and rewards, and the consequent social solidarity. But primitive communism was, in the current cant phrase of the day, an "economy of scarcity"; it was the community of poverty; it could not develop the productive capacities of mankind. That is why it had to give way to slave societies, to feudalism, and then to capitalism. Each stage of society was victorious over its predecessor because it carried the productive forces of mankind to a higher stage of development. Each in turn failed and disappeared when it could no longer develop production, but became instead a barrier to further advance. Capitalism gave humanity a tremendous leap forward in developing its productive forces and thereby created the possibilities of socialism; but in its turn capitalism has become a barrier to further advance; instead of going forward, capitalism is now destroying the very productive forces created by itself. Modern Communism must be victorious because it is the only way to free the productive forces to full development. Modern Communism is, therefore, "an economy of abundance"—the only society which can possibly merit that name.

Will The "Present Crisis" End?

Question: Upon what is based the assumption that the present crisis, unlike all previous ones, will not end in a renewed period of prosperity but in social revolution?

Answer: Our answer to this requires more precise definitions of "present crisis." If our reader means the economic crisis as marked in its beginning by the Wall Street crash of 1929, and would consider it "renewed prosperity" if The New York Times index of production regain the figure of 100—then we must answer that it is not yet certain that this "present crisis" will end in social revolution. But when we speak of the "present crisis" in the sense of the period of general crisis, which began with the World War; the crisis which witnessed the first break in capitalism as a world system and the emergence of the first Socialist Republic on one-sixth of the earth's surface; the crisis which has made any general expansion of capitalist economy impossible because unprofitable; the crisis which has swelled the army of unemployed into a "standing army" of tens of millions who have no hope of reemployment even by "renewed prosperity"; the crisis which has roused the hundreds of millions of colonial peoples to active rebellion against imperialist domination—then we can state, on the basis of these facts which we have cited to describe what we mean by the *general crisis* of capitalism, that a renewed prosperity in the sense of capitalism rising to new high levels is impossible, that the present period of revolutions and wars can end only in the proletarian revolution. Only the victory of the proletariat, the working class, can solve the problems of the next step forward of the human race, the problems of making mankind the master of the wonderful machinery of production which he himself has created, but of which he is the helpless victim so long as capitalism still persists.

Due to the short period between the time most of our readers get the magazine and the next press time, it is not practicable for Earl Browder to answer questions relating to one week's article in the next week's issue. Moreover, so many questions are coming in that a certain amount of grouping is necessary in order to cover the ground. Thus, half a dozen questions bearing on various phases of one major problem may be covered in one question which strikes at the root of the problem.—THE EDITORS.

Mackey

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Afternoon of a Realtor

EDWIN SEAVER

MR. S. OSGOOD BENNETT—or more familiarly "The S. O. B." to the office staff—Mr. S. Osgood Bennett of Boardman and Bennett, Realtors —*East Side-West Side-All-Around-the-town* B. & B. for Dwellings of Distinction—Mr. S. Osgood Bennett was bored.[1] Mr. Bennett was also a little stewed. He had just returned to the office from one of those three-hours-for-lunch affairs at the club—we eat too much, the thought had occurred to him with a belch in the taxi on the way back; we drink too much, smoke too much. The morning eater is almost certainly a man of inferior energy; I mean the afternoon smoker, scientific diets for scientific days—and now yawning vacantly behind a large, red, meaty, polite hand, he was wondering what the devil he had ever returned for. That was a real teaser. It would be different if there was anything to do; I mean if there was any business to transact, or a conference or something like that. But there wasn't. Not a goddammed thing. Business was so lousy, if it was any lousier. . . .

No, better correct that thought right away. Mr. Bennett reined himself in sharply. Business was getting better, things were looking up, prosperity was just around the corner. There is no depression; it's only a state of mind.

Just habit, that's all it was, Mr. Bennett decided, settling the gardenia in the lapel of his coat. I mean this business of coming back to the office after lunch, just habit that's all. Like—well, what difference did it make what it was like? Like going home in the evening, for instance, or buttoning your fly, or smiling at the wife over the table, or. . . .

Mr. Bennett looked at the handsomely framed photograph of his wife on the desk, squinting one eye soberly for appraisal. Funny now, like you take that picture. Been standing there on the desk nine, no ten years, and most of the time it's just the same as if it wasn't there at all. Come to think of it, seems like I never hardly realized it was there since I first brought it to the office.

Yes, tempus fugits alright. Mr. Bennett sighed, aware of the rush of time like the sound of air escaping from a punctured tire. *Armo virumque canno, Troiae qui primus aboris.* Funny how you could remember things like that all of a sudden for no reason at all. The mind sure was a wonderful thing.

After all, what are we but creatures of habit? And if of service we can make a habit, of loyalty, of courtesy. . . . Mr. Bennett recalled his recent address to his brother realtors with a certain glow of pride.

[1] A chapter from the forthcoming novel, ***Between the Hammer and the Anvil.*** The time is April, 1932.

Dum dum de dum
Dum dum de dum
Happy days are here again.

Mr. Bennett hummed off key, jerking himself up in his chair and lifting one sharply creased trouser over the arm. This was no time to be getting. . . . Must be the weather. Always feel sort of lazy and ornery—like in April. Spring fever. Or the chair probably. Leather seat too warm man gets. . . . Not so bad though for a man in his fifties, at that. What this country needs is a good five cent piece of. . . . Mr. Bennett grinned complacently. Or maybe it was those dirty stories we were telling at lunch.

There was a young man from Timbuctoo
Who said dear lady how d'you do
Dum dum de de dum
Dum dum de de dum

How did that last line go now? Mr. Bennett studied the humble prim back of his secretary with a puzzled frown, trying to remember how the limerick went. Nah, no use asking her; she wouldn't know how it went. Trust the wife to palm off a phoney like that on him. Charitable Charlotte salvages secretary. After all, Osgood, we've got to do something to help the unemployed, and besides she'll work for almost nothing. As if things weren't bad enough without. . . .

Clever woman the wife was, though. You had to hand it to her. Keeping two servants without paying them a cent, and getting credit for sharing the work. That was the way to keep down expenses alright.

Mr. Bennett stroked his sleek, red, smooth-shaven jowls meditatively, estimating the curve of his secretary's rump where it overflowed the boundaries of the diminutive typist's chair, the possible charms hidden under the stiff tweed skirt. Not so bad at that. I mean sometimes these prim ones are the hottest of all. If you covered up her face with a sack, for instance. Be a good one on the wife, anyway.

Suddenly, incalculably, he made a swipe at the fly hovering around his head. Ha! fooled you, didn't I? Mr. Bennett felt a gratifying flush of power as he clenched his fist tighter and tighter, crushing the life out of the fly. That'll teach you a lesson.

Turning to the wastebasket beside his desk, he dropped his victim into it. His eyes fell upon an empty bag, all that was left of Miss Simmon's lunch probably. Mr. Bennett had an inspiration. Taking the bag cautiously from the basket, he gripped it around the neck and blew into it until his face became purple. Then glancing cunningly at his secretary's concentrated back, he brought the bag sharply down on his desk.

Bam!

Miss Simmons jumped up from her chair with a shriek, her narrow shoulders hunched in defense, her hands clutching a little handkerchief between her meagre breasts.

"Oh mercy, Mr. Bennett!" she gasped, trying to pass off the shock with a nervous laugh. "You frightened me so."

"Sorry." Mr. Bennett grinned at her foolishly. "Didn't know it was loaded."

"Well!" Miss Simmons fluttered a dry trembling hand over the neat part in the centre of her hair. "I certainly. . . . little boys must play, I suppose."

"Humph!" said Mr. Bennett, turning sourly to his desk. No use. It would take more than a sack to do the trick.

Rising heavily from his chair, he made his way to the water cooler and extracted a paper cup from the box on top of the container.

"Oh Miss Simmons," he said gargling a mouthful of water. "Any word from Mr. Freer about that dispossess notice?"

"Not yet. But I'll look to make sure." Miss Simmons began rummaging nervously through the file on her desk.

Mr. Bennett spat out the water and threw the cup after it into the basket.

"Never mind," he said sharply, suddenly irritated by the alacrity with which Miss Simmons returned to her typing. What in God's name did she find to keep so busy about all the time? Mr. Bennett felt almost resentful. In a vague sort of way he felt her industry to be a rebuke to him. Anyway, the woman got in his hair.

"This fellow Freer," he said staring through the French windows at the traffic-cluttered side street three stories below. "I understand he's a writer. Have you ever seen any of his stuff? No, nor have I. Oh, I see all the magazines: Collier's, Saturday Evening Post, Liberty, I read 'em all. But I've never come across his name once. Now how do you make that out?"

Miss Simmons gave it up. "I don't know, I'm sure," she said.

Mr. Bennett took a toothpick from his vest pocket and began exploring in his mouth. "Probably a poet or something?" he said, sucking his teeth.

Wife's a nice girl, too. Damn nice girl. Real good looker. With a figger like hers, to be tied up with such a dead-beat. Mr. Bennett shook his head. I can't make it out. Mr. Bennett felt real sorry for young Mrs. Freer. A real nice girl, she was. I might take a walk over there and talk to her now. Not such a bad idea at that. Sort of suggest the dispossess notice was only a routine matter, kind of, and maybe arrangements. . . . Well? Well, maybe. . . .

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"Come to think of it," Miss Simmons said, resting her hands on the sides of her typewriter, "I did see Mr. Freer's name the other day in the paper."

"Is that a fact?"

"In connection with some committee or other, I can't remember what. The paper said they were supporting the Communist candidates."

"Is that a fact?" Mr. Bennett's pale, fishy eyes awoke from slumber. "By Jesus, I thought so. You know the first time I had a good look at that guy, I was sort of leery of him. I mean the way he wears his hair and everything. I said to myself he must be one of those god . . . one of those Reds or something phoney like that."

"That's what comes of trying to be decent to people," Mr. Bennett pointed an accusing finger at Miss Simmons. "You know I could have put him out on the street three months ago. But did I? Oh no. I'll give him another chance, I said. They're just a young couple, I said, times are hard and all that. And now look what I've got for my trouble. Can't pay his rent, but he can be a Red, eh? Why didn't you tell me before?"

"But, Mr. Bennett, I didn't see it until just the other day. And after all, what difference can it make? I mean the house has been half empty for more than a year, hasn't it? It isn't as if—"

"Half empty!" echoed Mr. Bennett scornfully. "Do you realize we didn't even take in 35 percent of the rents last month on that house? Just try and figure that out on the basis of our seventy-nine houses. I'm not talking about the empties. B. & B. are willing to stand by their old tenants in full confidence of a return to normal conditions. But how do you know this fellow Freer's not been around organizing a rent strike or something? They do that, you know, these Reds. Get all the tenants in a house to stick together and refuse to pay the rent. Figure you won't dare to put 'em all out at once."

"I hardly think Mr. Freer would do that," Miss Simmons said. "I mean it would be too ungrateful."

"Humph! A lot they care about gratitude, that bunch. Look at all this country's done for 'em, giving 'em all a chance to be somebody and get somewhere; but does that stop 'em from crabbing around? It does, like hell. We're too easy on 'em, that's what."

Aware of the rising barometer of resentment, Mr. Bennett began to feel sure of himself once more. It felt good to have something to be sore about. It made you feel as if you could get your teeth into something at last. That was the trouble with this damned depression. It was like fighting shadows all the time; the more you fought the worse you were beaten. The thing to do was to round up all these trouble makers, these Reds and Communists and Socialists and what not, and do something. Do something!

Mr. Bennett's two hundred pounds of useless energy clamored for the release of assault.

"I'll tell you something else," he said confidentially. "It's not only the Reds we've got to watch out for. It's the Jew bankers as well. You mark my words." He nodded his head ominously.

Miss Simmons had no love for Jews. She said so herself, but still she believed in being fair. "After all, Mr. Bennett," she said timidly, "all bankers are not Jews, are they?"

"Nah, but the real money at the top is Jew money. You can't tell what names they hide behind."

On this point Mr. Bennett was adamant. He had inside information and was not to be put off by mere appearances.

"Well, maybe so." Miss Simmons sighed hopelessly and pulled herself up from the hips. "Oh dear, I do wish this awful depression was over. You do think it will be over soon, don't you, Mr. Bennett?"

"No question about it," Mr. Bennett said emphatically. "Once we get the election off our minds and can settle down to business. . . ."

"I hope so," Miss Simmons said, beginning to peck at her typewriter once more.

Mr. Bennett looked at his watch. It was three-thirty.

"Guess I'll take a walk over to the house and see what's doing," he said, reaching for his derby and cane.

Correspondence

"Smash the Dunckel Bill"

To The New Masses:

I have just received the following:

MICHIGAN
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Charles Hatchard,
[Address Omitted]
Dear Mr. Hatchard:

This will acknowledge your letter of May 10. I seriously doubt if the Dunckel-Baldwin Bill will become law. Your points are well taken in the matter.

Thanking you for your views, I am
Sincerely yours,
George A. Schroeder, Speaker,
House of Representatives.

My letter—which cited our American revolutionary traditions and quoted Lincoln, Mark Twain and The Connecticut Constitution on our "right to change the government by whatever means we may deem expedient"—was prompted by your editorial feature in last week's issue.

C. H.

Robeson's Silent Protest

To The New Masses:

When Paul Robeson saw the film which Zoltan Korda brought back from an expedition to Africa he believed that London Film Productions were going to make a picture which was genuinely African. He was trapped by them through his absorption at that time in the preservation of African Negro customs and culture. It was only when he saw the film, *Sanders of the River,* at its Gala Presentation at the Leicester Square Theatre, London, on 2nd April in aid of the Newspaper Press Fund, that he realized what he had been party to. He refused to sing though the British capitalist press had announced that he would do so on his personal appearance. It was quite obvious as he stood on the stage and received the plaudits of the capitalist audience who had paid from £10 10/ to 6/ to see him almost nude, that he realized he had been exploited and cajoled by the capitalists of the film industry into making a picture which not only exonerated the use of imperialist machine-guns against hordes of unarmed natives, but was an incentive to further repressive measures. He quietly but firmly refused to sing a note. The stage hands pushed a piano onto the stage and Robeson turned and walked straight off.

The original film was nothing like as blatant as the final version. It was the presentation in London of *The Bengal Lancers,* America's glorification of British Imperialism, which gave London Film Productions the nerve to put *Sanders of the River* across. The scenario was rewritten when the film was complete—all but a few retakes. Robeson was thus caught.

Sanders of the River, with its thinly veiled fascist hero, Commissioner Sanders, is the most violent attack on any native rights which may exist in Africa, and the glorification of the noble ex-convict, Bosambo, a Liberian Negro (Paul Robeson) who betrays an independently-minded tribe to the British commissioner, and after murdering the tribal chief (with Sanders standing by), is made king in his place for services rendered.

As a piece of film making, the picture is patently artificial except for the few real African sequences, and incredibly long; but since London Film Productions successfully muzzled all press criticism by donating the first performance to the press charity, it has been unanimously "heiled" as the triumph of the British studios.

Bravo, Paul Robeson, for making the first sign of protest!

Laurel James.

Twenty-five Years After

To The New Masses:

I read Oscar Leonard's letter in The New Masses anent the Dreiser controversy. It is more than 25 years since I have seen or heard the name. Oscar will not be flattered. (I assume he has been writing all these years as he was then.) My work has taken me all over this "land of the spree and home of the slave" but my path has not crossed Oscar's.

Along about 1908-09-10, Oscar Leonard and myself belonged to the Socialist Party. There was a split between what was called, in those days, the Opportunists and the Impossibilists. We know now that in reality we were Social-Democrats and Bolsheviks. The fight went to a national referendum and we Bolsheviks, née Impossibilists, won. Awarded

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the charter we proceeded to organize. We launched branches in most of the twenty-eight wards of the city. For some unknown reason, or no reason at all, I was elected general secretary of the Socialist Party in St. Louis, Mo., the "Protestors" we were called. Jack Keifer was treasurer. He is the only officer I can recall. We had a number of stout-hearted, class-conscious members. I remember Geo. B. Cross, George Boswell and now that his name appears in your recent issue, Oscar Leonard.

Where are all those tried-and-true comrades of an older generation? I wonder if they would be interested to know that I have a rendezvous for radicals in my shop here in Bridgeport exactly like my shop that was at 1005 Pine St., St. Louis, Mo. And what a conglomeration foregathered there! The oddest thing, the strangest thing, in my estimation, was the fact that representatives of the three divisions of Mexican politics, right, left and center, were in my place at the same time. Mr. Serrano, Mexican consul to St. Louis, had desk room. Diaz was President of Mexico at the time. One day a woman and two men, obviously Mexican peons, came in to see me, not Consul Serrano. They wanted to use a typewriter and if I would trust them with it they wanted to take it home on rent. Kate Richards O'Hare was in the back room using a typewriter and had been there six months. I could not clutter up the place completely with radical writers so I let my Mexicans take the typewriter home to use. They gave their names: Magon and Vilareal. We did not know them at the time but later, when they were imprisoned by the U. S. Government for operating a "junta" in the interest of the real left-wingers, the Mexican Marxians, we knew we had been harboring "angels unawares."

Another day a dashing, romantic figure strode in, flashing a smile as wide as a barn. He announced a revolution would break out in Mexico "any day now"; he, of course, represented the middle-class. This gay, dashing fellow said he wanted an audience. When, in reply to our inquiry he announced he would talk on Art, did we get a shock! In fact my 100 percent Americanism was being jarred to its foundations. Here was a wild-looking Indian who wanted to talk to "civilized Americans" on Art and only a few days ago some peons said they could write on a typewriter! Hell, what is this? Okay, we'll try anything once. Let's see what this guy's got.

There was a bohemian club in St. Louis in which William Marion Reedy, of Reedy's Mirror, was a moving spirit. Reedy agreed to give our Mexican friend the use of the club for his lecture. The place was a sort of a glorified beer garden. A goodly crowd gathered and they were not disappointed. It was a treat. A year or so later our artist friend was a lieutenant in Madero's army. His name was, and I hope still is, L. Guiterrez De Lara. He was a glorious chap.

My work, repairing typewriters, took me into the offices of The St. Louis Post-Despatch. I got to know all the fellows. There was one among them to whom I became much attached. He was quiet-spoken with a delightful sense of humor. His gaze always met yours squarely. I liked him. He was interested in art. I invited him to hear the Mexican. He accepted and was thrilled by the talk. Sitting beside me he drew caricatures. One of Reedy was a gem. Reedy was built on the lines of Irvin Cobb. I was plugging for our new left-wing socialist group and I asked my artist friend from The Post-Despatch to join. He signed an application and was I happy!

In reading this over I see I forgot to mention the name of my artist friend of The St. Louis Post-Despatch. Robert Minor is the name.

T. F. McLAUGHLIN.

77 Middle Street,
Bridgeport, Conn.

Letters in Brief

LEM HARRIS, Secretary of the Farmers' National Committee for Action, has sent us an appeal for "a person and a car to tour farmer organizers in the drought-stricken area for a minimum of four weeks this summer as a part of an intensive organizing campaign." He may be communicated with at P. O. Box 540, Minneapolis.

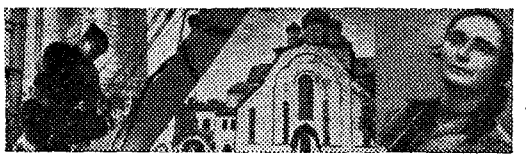
A. Garcia Diaz, recalling Robert Forsythe's article on Mae West in THE NEW MASSES (and Michael Gold's in The Daily Worker) mourns the cloud under which the actress has been forced to operate by "silly moralistic conventions." He says: "All sensible admirers of her art and personality must feel a shock of despair and deep disappointment at the lack of spontaneity to which the ill-influence of censorship and the preeminently commercial nature of her Paramount Films directors' requirements have reduced her."

H. Borah objects to seeing "perfectly good space wasted on the isolated differences of Messrs. Seaver and Gerlando." He writes: "As a constant reader and staunch supporter, I venture to suggest that you try to keep the magazine from becoming too unbearably arty. More power to Bob Forsythe, Earl Browder and Mike Gold. And if anyone starts beefing about art: thumbs down!"

A. L. Wirin writes that the address of the Gallup Defense Committee is now Santa Fe, New Mexico, instead of Gallup.

The Composers Collective of the New York Pierre Degeyter Club invites those interested in writing songs for workers to attend meetings at 165 West 23rd Street, New York, on Saturday afternoons from three to five.

The banquet in New York to mark the coming World Congress of the Communist International has been postponed from June 8 to July 27, we are informed.



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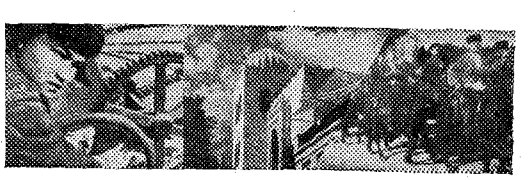

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Louis D. Brandeis: Why Liberalism Failed

MR. JUSTICE BRANDEIS' approach is fundamentally ethical.[1] At his worst, he is sheer Rotarian. At his best, he is the philosophic humanitarian outlining a social-democratic future that is nonetheless utopian because it seems so sane and practical. One of the advantages of this collection from his writings is that it contains much poor material, stray bits piously gathered up by scholarly White Wings along the trail of a great career. In it our Homer nods, and in nodding reveals depths unsuspected beneath the protective formalism of expressions from the bench. One of the difficulties in evaluating a member of the Supreme Court is that elevation to it is a sort of apotheosis, a withdrawal from life, like taking holy orders or being gathered to one's fathers. The *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* applies with almost equal force to the reverend justices, interpreting the Law and the Prophets in some never-land 'twixt heaven and earth. The bench is a bourne whence no man but Charles Evans Hughes returns, and the hollow grandeur of the judicial mausoleum often provides Olympian overtones hardly merited by the actual words spoken. Fortunately Osmond K. Fraenkel and Clarence M. Lewis present Mr. Justice Brandeis both Before and After. The effect is to provide a glimpse of the seer in his intellectual underwear.

An example: In 1913 The Times Annalist sent an interviewer to speak with Mr. Brandeis. His legal sling-shot and journalistic pebbles had already brought howls of rage from the Goliaths of American railroading, insurance and finance. The public wanted the radical young David's views on social progress. "When men begin to think as hard, as intensely, about their social problems," Mr. Brandeis told his interviewer, "as they have thought about automobiles, aeroplanes and wireless telegraphy, nothing will be socially impossible. Many things which have seemed inevitable will be seen to have been quite unnecessary." "Putting thought upon social problems," the interviewer suggested, "does not pay so well as putting it upon automobiles and aeroplanes." Messrs. Fraenkel and Lewis saved Mr. Brandeis' reply for posterity:

> "No," Mr. Brandeis says, slowly, "that isn't it. Think of the great work that has been done in the world by men who had no thought of money reward. No, money is not worth a great man's time. It is unworthy of greatness to strive for that alone. What then? Power? That isn't much better, if you mean the kind of power which springs from money. Is it the game? You hear that nowadays—the game! It sounds too frivolous. To me the word is Service. Money-making will become incidental to Service. The man of the future will think more of giving Service than of making money, no matter what particular kind of Service it happens to be. . . . That will be the spirit of business in the future."

The same intellectual motif reappears, though less obviously, throughout the pattern of Mr. Justice Brandeis' social conceptions. Democracy is "trust in the moral instinct of the people." Again, "It substitutes self-restraint for external restraint. . . . It is possible only where the process of perfecting the individual is pursued. . . . Hence the industrial struggle is essentially an affair of the church and its imperative task." But Mr. Brandeis was no mere sermonizer. In an address before the Ethical Culture Society at Boston in 1912, he could describe the life of the steel worker in the Pittsburgh area as "so inhuman as to make our former Negro slavery infinitely preferable." He asked his audience, "Can this contradiction—our grand political liberty and this industrial slavery—long coexist? Either political liberty will be extinguished or industrial liberty must be restored." He could put his finger on the heart of the problem. The "main objection," he wrote, "to the very large corporation is that it makes possible—and in many cases makes inevitable—the exercise of industrial absolutism." One of the finest embodiments of the humanitarianism of the small propertied classes in a period when a still expanding capitalism allowed play to pity for the underdog, Mr. Brandeis could not take the next step and recognize that the institution of private property itself made the large corporation inevitable, nor see that a peaceful surrender of power was unlikely. "In my judgment," Mr. Brandeis could tell an interviewer for La Follette's Weekly in 1913, "we are going through the following stages: we already have had industrial despotism. With the recognition of the unions, this is changing into a constitutional monarchy, with well-defined limitations placed about the employer's formerly autocratic power. Next comes profit-sharing. This, however, is to be only a transitional, halfway stage. Following upon it will come the sharing of responsibility, as well as profits. The eventual outcome promises to be full-grown industrial democracy. As to this last step the Socialists have furnished us with an ideal full of suggestion."

Mr. Justice Brandeis, precisely because of his superior knowledge, vision and sympathy, typifies better than any other man in our time the crucial weakness of liberalism, the social philosophy of the lower middle class—its failure to see that the fact of private property creates classes and sets in motion forces that make the reform of capitalism impossible. From this failure springs the contradiction involved in Mr. Justice Brandeis' treatment of business regulation, and from it springs the tragic development by which liberalism paves the way for its own destruction in fascism. Faced with the problem of big business menacing the small propertied class whose aspirations and fears he voices, Mr. Justice Brandeis finds himself on the horns of a dilemma. His dissent in Liggett v. Lee would turn back the clock of economic development, permitting the small business man to use the power of the State against the corporation. Mr. Justice Brandeis would deny to corporations the protection given "persons" against discriminatory legislation designed to destroy them. This, one of his most beautiful opinions, ends on a note of nostalgia for an earlier day before the rise of the great business combination had begun to destroy the free market and to chain the entrepreneur. Mr. Justice Brandeis ended his opinion:

> There is a widespread belief that the existing unemployment is the result, in large part, of the gross inequality in the distribution of wealth and income which giant corporations have fostered; that by the control which the few have exerted through giant corporations individual initiative and effort are being paralyzed, creative power impaired and human happiness lessened; that the true prosperity of our past came not from big business, but through the courage, the energy, and the resourcefulness of small men; that only by releasing from corporate control the faculties of the unknown many, only by reopening to them the opportunities for leadership, can confidence in our future be restored and the existing misery be overcome; and that only through participation by the many in the responsibilities and determinations of business can Americans secure the moral and intellectual development which is essential to the maintenance of liberty.

That dissent, in March, 1933, called for revival of the free market. A year before, in the Oklahoma Ice Case dissent, Mr. Justice Brandeis had articulated the case for the "planned economy." The contradiction has grown all too familiar in other spheres. If the Brandeis opinion in Liggett v. Lee voices the same middle-class protest and nostalgia harnessed by the fascist demagogue, his opinion in the Oklahoma Ice Case puts forward for adoption the idea that underlies the Corporative State. "Increasingly," Mr. Justice Brandeis wrote, "doubt is expressed whether it is economically wise, or morally right, that men should be permitted to add to the producing facilities of an industry which is already suffering from overcapacity." If the state cannot thus freeze the economic status quo, it has a legal alternative which is also the economic alternative. "It is settled by unanimous decisions of this court that the due process clause

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1 *The Curse of Bigness.* Miscellaneous Papers of Justice Brandeis. Edited by Osmond K. Fraenkel. As arranged by Clarence M. Lewis. The Viking Press. $3.50.

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does not prevent a state or city from engaging in the business of supplying its inhabitants with articles in general use, when it is believed that they cannot be secured at reasonable prices from the private dealers." But this alternative is distasteful to Mr. Justice Brandeis, as to his class. "If states are denied the power to prevent the harmful entry of a few individuals into a business, they may thus, in effect, close it altogether to private enterprise." Mr. Justice Brandeis had seen the problem more clearly in 1915 when he told the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations, ". . . it is one of the greatest economic errors to put any limitation upon production . . . we have not the power to produce more than there is a potential desire to consume."

"Remedial institutions," Mr. Justice Brandeis wrote in a letter to Robert W. Bruere in 1922, "are apt to fall under the control of the enemy and to become instruments of oppression." This was part of a plea to "seek for betterment within the broad lines of existing institutions" and a warning against believing "that you can find a universal remedy for evil conditions or immoral practices in effecting a fundamental change in society (as by State Socialism)." It serves more justly as a warning against liberal reform legislation. Mr. Justice Brandeis had seen the anti-trust laws used against the small business man and to stimulate the formation of greater business units than ever. He had seen the labor provisions of the Clayton Act turned against labor. Within two years of the time when the Supreme Court refused to allow Oklahoma to license and regulate the ice business, Mr. Justice Brandeis was to see the remedy proposed in his dissent given nationwide application through the N.R.A.—and to see the N.R.A. developing into the greatest weapon ever given big capital against little capital, and against worker and consumer. Hating the accompaniments of fascism as he must, the logic of his class position yet drives Mr. Justice Brandeis toward the Corporative State. The missing link in his thought, the missing link that is characteristic of liberalism, leads him to support one "remedial institution" after another. But this search for "betterment within the broad lines of existing institutions" can only place new "instruments of oppression" within "the control of the enemy." The social forces set in motion by the growing disequilibrium of economic power transform a State, based on property and contract to begin with, into an instrument of big capital. In the long run the only result of liberal reform is to increase the "instruments of oppression" which big capital can wield through the State. The Recovery program is the outstanding example.

Mr. Justice Brandeis illustrates the self-destroying tendencies of liberalism. Because of its class base, it seeks to preserve private property and is thereby driven toward the Corporative State. By its reforms, it only increases the power of a State that must increasingly be controlled by big capital. By taking an ethical position, by yearning for an earlier capitalism, by focussing attention on the great corporation while ignoring the fact that the great corporation is itself an inevitable outgrowth of private property, it prepares the public mind for the slogans of the fascist demagogue. Liberalism serves another historic role as well, and this also is better exemplified by Mr. Justice Brandeis than by any other of our liberals. Liberalism makes its appearance on the world scene as the champion of the doctrine of natural rights.

But the work of the great contemporary liberals on our bench has been aimed at the limitation of the rights which liberalism once espoused as absolute. The doctrine of natural rights, giving free rein to the capitalist, led inevitably to the emergence of big business despotism. But the attack on the doctrine, aimed to curb big business, results in entrenching its power more securely than ever by increasing the power of the State at a time when big business, high finance and the State finally merge into one inextricable whole. The democratic aspects of the State, the one peaceful vent for mass opinion, are curtailed more and more, while the strong man makes his appearance.

In such a period, the weakening of the doctrine of natural rights becomes a legal instrument not to curtail the rights of property but to curtail personal rights and the rights of the small business man and the working class.

"Unlicensed liberty," Mr. Justice Brandeis once wrote, "leads necessarily to despotism and oligarchy." But *licensed* liberty, whether under the Roosevelt program or under a completely fascist State, leads just as surely to despotism and oligarchy. There is no escape from the dilemma within the confines of capitalism. If the State has power to curtail the rights of property, it has legal justification to curtail other "natural rights," personal rights, workers' rights. And within the framework of a propertied society, where property controls the State, and the State itself has been erected to safeguard property, will not this power be used against labor rather than against capital? "Labor," Mr. Justice Brandeis said in 1913, "cannot on any terms surrender the right to strike . . . I do not approve even of compulsory investigation." Yet in 1926 Mr. Justice Brandeis wrote a Supreme Court decision which held that the right to strike was not an absolute right.

Mr. Justice Brandeis' vision and his blindness are alike summed up in a single passage from his testimony in 1915 before the United States Commission on Industrial Relations. "I think all of our human experience shows," he said, "that no one with absolute power can be trusted to give it up even in part. That has been the experience with political absolutism; it must prove the same with industrial absolutism. Industrial democracy will not come by gift. It has got to be won by those who desire it." So far, so good. But what is the solution? Mr. Brandeis continued, "And if the situation is such that a voluntary organization like a labor union is powerless to bring about the democratization of a business, I think we have in this fact some proof that the employing organization is larger than is consistent with the public interest. I mean by larger, is more powerful, has a financial interest too great to be useful to the State; and the State must in some way come to the aid of the workingmen if democratization is to be secured." So now we have Section 7A. Ask in Toledo. Ask in Akron. Ask in San Francisco or Minneapolis about that "aid."

ROGER BROOKS.

Two Worlds

I CHANGE WORLDS, by Anna Louise Strong. Henry Holt & Co. $3.

SEVERAL months ago on her recent visit to her native U. S. A. I saw Anna Louise Strong among a group of liberals to whom she was describing recent events in the Soviet Union. Probably, in point of years, she was the oldest person there, but in the matter of energy and alertness she was easily the youngest. The rest by contrast looked peculiarly slow and faded. Partly, no doubt, this was due to her own sheer physical wholesomeness and vivacity; but it must have been due much more to the world she had changed to and whose youth she reflected.

The bulk of her autobiography is the story of the twelve years during which this change took place. Twelve years is a long time, especially in a revolutionary era, and one of Miss Strong's purposes in writing this book is, by the guiding illuminations her experiences can furnish, to shorten the period for others.

Within these dozen years, however, much has happened to hang stronger and more direct lights over the entire contemporary scene than one individual life can furnish. Today few of those who are alert and active-minded enough to change of their own will—the passive will find change forced upon them—will need or be given so many years to make the change. For lingering crisis allows no one to preserve any illusions as to the health of capitalism; in America the New Deal devices have, one by one, revealed their nature and confirmed the Communist indictment that every capitalist government legislates always in the interests of its capitalists; fascism indicates to what lengths of deceit and violence capitalism will go to keep power; and the quick curtailment of education and other social services and the rapid abandonment of art patronage by the rich indicates in what unsafe hands culture is under capitalism. Therefore Miss Strong's experiences, as a personal record, have only a limited immediate relevance. Her book, however, is of the greatest importance, in other directions. Since she deals almost simultaneously with the two opposed worlds, the capitalist and communist, since she has experienced the best and the

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worst of both, her book permits a comparative view that, so far as I know, no other book has yet furnished us.

The conclusion one comes to inescapably is this: that in the Soviet system human energy is productive; whereas under capitalism it is wasted or perverted. We have of course observed in contemporary American life, crop destruction, forced under-consumption, the suppression of scientific advances. We have less frequently seen comments upon the perversion of human achievements because these perversions have been almost taken for granted. The commercialization of radio is one instance; but a subtler instance is the seizure by exploiters of pornography, by the Macfaddens and other magazine publishers, of the literary liberties fought for and won by courageous and persistent writers like Dreiser, Dos Passos and Anderson. Another instance is the Lindbergh episode. When Lindbergh's heroism became an instrument in the hands of an aviation company, it lost its social values; he was no longer a people's hero. Today there is even to be noted an undercurrent of hostility to him. And somehow the kidnaping and death of his child fits in the dark picture. It was another and illegal attempt to profit on this act of heroism. It is part of the pattern. Compare with this the social acceptance and use of the Soviet Chelyushkin heroes and the difference at once becomes clear. The qualities of the Soviet system are such as to make a social and progressive good of all human achievements, and by an act of heroism the hero is bound closer to the people, not estranged from them.

Unquestionably it is the realization of this that kept Miss Strong close to the Soviet world in spite of disappointments and personal frustrations. She arrived in Russia in the worst years of the 1922 famine as an American relief worker; she saw what appeared a dissolution of socialism in the NEP period; she saw the disorganization and exhaustion that followed the first overwhelming drive of collectivization; yet, somehow, in this system even the mistakes and the errors were useful. Some of her own undertakings in Russia, her John Reed colony for homeless youngsters, an enterprise for the establishment of American workshops, her initiation of an English newspaper in Moscow, all failed in their first intentions, yet all became successes beyond her first intentions. In this social system orientated toward the common good and caught in what is obviously one of the strongest creative currents in human history, nothing is wasted.

What happened to her American efforts? At her very first job, on a religious publication, her youthful enthusiasm was callously exploited. She was discharged, because it was a policy of the magazine to staff its office with ambitious and talented young people who would be kept until all that could be gotten out of them at low pay had been extracted. As the victim of a similar dodge, I can understand the bitter memory it left in Miss Strong's mind. Later she organized child-welfare exhibits which, in the newer Western cities became foci of social change; but competing and more "practical" exhibits by the heavily endowed Russell Sage Foundation reduced the movement to innocuousness. She became active in the labor movement in Seattle, a successful labor editor, without however understanding the reality of the class struggle. And because of this lack of understanding it was not till long afterwards, in Russia, that she arrived at a mature knowledge of the event in which she had taken a leading part, the Seattle general strike. Then, at last, she understood the confusion of the leaders: then she realized the role of the government in Washington, which, merely by transfering its construction orders to other cities, did most to break up labor strength in Seattle. Thus, one by one, in her capitalist homeland, all her successes became defeats.

A second achievement of *I Change Worlds* is to give a sense of the democracy in Russian life, more tangibly than it has been given in any other book I have read. The two outward signs of Russian life are first devotion and obedience, commonly translated by hostile observers as tyranny; and the enormous amount of committees and meetings which are often translated, even by friendly observers, as inefficiency. The discussions seem endless, while the decisions are unrecordable, existing in implications. But as a result of these seeming, endless conferences, this untiring march of meetings from the factories and fields to the council chambers in the Kremlin, the collective will is slowly discovered and then applied, and it is obeyed gladly because it *is* the collective will. In a sense impossible in any other political system yet developed, the Soviet citizen enacts his own decision, and enjoys the completest democracy yet evolved.

Another achievement of *I Change Worlds* is its frank illustration of the psychology of the liberal, especially of the liberal of the author's generation. It explains the twelve years experience needed to turn her into a Communist; and the vacillations of such of her contemporaries as Dreiser, Anderson and others who have come close to the revolutionary movement, then unaccountably veered away, who exhibited toward it astonishing alternations of arrogance and humility.

Miss Strong achieved a personal efficiency which gave her an illusion of freedom. Like Dreiser, who made his living when he needed to as a journalist and as an editor, like Anderson who made his living when he needed to by running a factory, writing advertising copy and editing country newspapers, Miss Strong could turn at will to lecturing, organizing, writing, social work. It gave them an illusion of economic powers, an illusion of success. At one time, in a moment of humility, Miss Strong declared that her greatest ambition was to be "used" to the full extent of her powers. There is of course egotism in such a declaration, an intimation that she has special powers that can be used. The passive quality of such an offering did not occur to her until, soaked in Russian experience, she realized that it is better to act than to give. When liberals so identify themselves with the revolutionary movement that they feel actors in it, not people coming to it with gifts, then they become revolutionists; then the hesitations and the doubts disappear. Their solitary independence, a rare enough achievement in the capitalist system, but decreasingly possible in that system, can then become a collective value.

I have indicated, I hope, the more important values of Miss Strong's book. It remains to be added that the writing is vivid, though at times her ardor drops into sentimentality; and that in the range of her experiences and equally in their intensity her book is one of the most absorbing autobiographical records of our time.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

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A South American Classic

THE VORTEX, by José Eustacio Rivera. Putnam. $2.50.

THIS book has for several years been widely and on the whole justly acclaimed as a great South American novel. It is, however, characteristic of the literary insularity of the United States and in particular of its pronounced apathy toward the culture of the Hispanic republics that the American version of *La Vorágine* appears so late, in fact seven years after the death of its author. Yet in a broad and significant sense it is an American novel because, breaking away from a servile colonialism that has too long hindered the development of Hispanic literature, it is an authentic record of experience in the Western Hemisphere.

The Vortex relates the adventures of the narrator, the young poet Arturo Cova, first in the tropical pampas of his native Colombia where a half-chivalrous, half-carnal love for Alicia has drawn him, and then in the adjoining jungles and rubber plantations whither he is led by desires compounded of that same love, revenge and a lofty egoism. The second part, which deals with conditions on the rubber plantations, is a rare social document. If only for this reason, the book cannot fail to move the reader very deeply; but the novel as a whole is marked by an intensity of emotion and an unmistakable feeling of truth that distinguish it as a work of art.

Rivera, nevertheless, will puzzle the reader in no small degree. Here is a powerful piece of naturalistic writing that somehow does not belong to the tradition from which a Zola or a Dreiser or a Caldwell spring. The difference between Rivera and our more familiar contemporaries lies not so much in the topic or the setting of the novel, but in a certain reckless, savage and wholly spontaneous manner of describing crude natural phenomena and even cruder human conduct, and in an extraordinary mixture of quixotic and eloquent romanticism, of bold, glamorous exoticism and dashing, verbose lyricism which the poetic Cova has injected into his tale.

Stating it in more general terms, one may perhaps account for the unusual qualities of *The Vortex* by saying that it represents the blending, through the medium of a sensitive and highly articulate imagination, of two cultural and class points of view: a feudal, aristocratic idealism and a primitive, elemental realism. Cova (who must be none other than Rivera himself) is the hero of some 16th or 17th century Spanish romance come to life in a pre-historic wilderness whose dread realities, natural and social, he experiences. The sophistication of bourgeois realism and naturalism, its straining for objectivity and its obsession with the horrendous or the miserable as an end in itself are lacking here. In fact it is Rivera's naïve and obvious sincerity, both in his cloak-and-sword chivalry, his fierce hatred of the jungle's cruelties and his outspoken sympathies with the oppressed, that keep the story from ever becoming absurd or grotesque.

However, it takes a tough stomach to hold some of the dishes that Rivera serves. On the rubber plantations there are tortures for the workers that even Hitler has never heard of. Here "Christians," literally sold into slavery, perish by the thousands, while dead Indians are not even counted. There are times when Rivera clearly senses the class struggle, and though he understands the immediate reasons for the terrifying human exploitation which he depicts, he is ignorant of the underlying causes and vents his rage and indignation on an inhospitable nature. His efforts to rescue the jungle victims of imperialism end in failure and he does not understand why they were doomed.

FRANK L. GORDON.

Mansion and Mill

IN THEIR OWN IMAGE, by Hamilton Basso. Chas. Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

IT IS probably a mistake for a reviewer to read over the outline of a novel on the jacket. Since I might as well acknowledge in the beginning that I am a critic of no experience, I will also acknowledge this mistake I made. For the mistake has had an influence on my general opinion of this novel. Here is what part of that outline on the jacket said:

"The head of this household of American aristocrats is a harassed widow who made her millions in mayonnaise. At her palatial Aiken cottage she has gathered her stolid son, married to a girl whose purse is as lean as her blood is blue and her morals purple; her daughter doomed to wed an Italian princeling; a few choice guests, most of them cadging their way through the season.

"The brittle make-believe of their daily lives, filled with polo, cards, drinking, amorous intrigue and petty jealousies is suddenly shattered by the fear of injury from the uncouth masses of Americans who dwell outside the gates. There is a strike in a valley mill-town, suspicious faces are seen on the trim streets and private detectives swarm about the great houses.

"The full impact of this stark fear of reality strikes the Troys and their guests when a young mill hand, who, in his few free hours, had trudged miles of dusty roads with home-made painting outfit to catch on his canvas a breath of the bright beauty of the gleaming estates, is killed by private detectives at the Troy's gateway. They did not know him, some of them had never seen him, but the effect of his brief life and tragic death leads the novel to a dramatic crisis which puts, one by one, these American aristocrats in their proper places."

Some years ago I went from Columbia, S. C. to work for a winter and spring in

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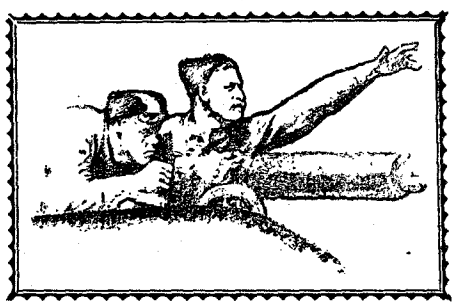

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Aiken County. Part of my work took me to Graniteville and the other cotton-mill towns in the valley between Aiken and Augusta. Many times I passed the estates of the rich people who use their houses for three months or less in the winter. Once, or more than once, I stood outside the gates of these mansions called winter cottages and figured out, approximately, just how many of the families stuffed into the Graniteville shacks could live, with plenty of room and sunlight left over, in one of those mansions.

Because I had been there and seen and realized so many times the contrast of actual and bitter want, ignorance and even degradation with the wealth and (at least from the outside it seemed so) beauty and color of the lives of the rich, and because of the story on the jacket, I read the novel expecting more than I should have expected.

So far as he has gone Hamilton Basso has presented a realistic picture both of the workers and the wealthy people. The workers and the situation at the mill are sketched in sympathetically. In contrast to them many of the winter residents of Aiken, those who possess wealth, the daughter-in-law of the mayonnaise queen, the woman who takes poison and others are shown up relentlessly as empty, foolish people. One of the guests, a painter who gets five-thousand-dollar commissions for painting horses and making love to their owners, is especially well done.

I liked the descriptions of the country around Aiken. The writer, by means of suggestion, gives the feeling of the pine forests where the winter residents go riding, the polo field, the business street of the village, as the winter people call it, on a Saturday afternoon, and the "Valley" where the mills squat surrounded by the shacks set close together. I felt that I had just gone that way myself, again.

But there was a great disappointment. I felt cheated, not only because of what the jacket said, but because the great dramatic possibilities which I felt the book presented in the beginning were not carried out to the end. Something big was there, and what the jacket calls a dramatic crisis which puts the American aristocrats in their proper places did not turn out to be so.

The whole first part, the workers stirring and growing into the spirit of the strike and the rich people becoming uneasy and hysterical because of the strike and their own personal futilities, suggests more than the ending the writer gives us. It suggests more the sort of thing which Zola gives in *Germinal* when the miners march past the house of the frightened bourgeoisie. That is the disappointment. I felt that the writer had summoned himself to a great piece of work, and knowingly or unknowingly failed to carry it out.

It is possible that I have mistaken the author's intention. Perhaps he set out to write a satirical novel about the wealthy and included the workers only in order to emphasize or point up the emptiness and fear in the minds of those who possess. If this is so then he has done a good piece of work. For me it is not a satisfying piece of work. I feel something like a person who has been summoned to a banquet and finds only a lunch waiting. However, for those who are not too hungry, the lunch is excellent.

GRACE LUMPKIN.

Brief Review

SKIN DEEP, by M. C. Phillips of Consumers' Research. Vanguard Press. $2.

Mercury in skin bleaches, thyroid in reducing preparations, poisonous hair and eyelash dyes and depilatories—and profits in the maker's pocket. Under capitalism, whatever ingredients you add must equal profit or it isn't good arithmetic. A few deaths, a little blindness, some trifling skin diseases—these are minor debits. Miss Phillips, using the files of Consumers' Research, gives analyses of popular cosmetics and beauty preparations, together with some trade and government data. Brand names of products are given. There is a brief, common-sense chapter on diet ballyhoo, but the comments on the cosmetic industry and its advertising are naive. Miss Phillips urges readers to "work for a Department of the Consumer in each state and in the federal government." Meanwhile, keep in touch with the Federal Trade Commission and work for the passage of a "model bill" for drug and cosmetic legislation. The author has done a good job is the analytical reporting of harmful and harmless cosmetics. Her philosophical approach to the problem, however, is hardly skin deep.

NATURE'S WAY, by Victor C. Pedersen, M.D. New York. G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1934. $1.

As it is small and inexpensive, this little book may have a wide circulation. It is simply a rehash of old ideas about the sterile period in woman's monthly cycle of ovulation and menstruation.

It advocates birth control through limitation of intercourse to the barren period. Dr. Pedersen endeavors to convey the idea that the method is safe and practical. It is neither.

Recently the Catholic clergy and laity have been promoting this idea. One can only assume this sudden interest to be inspired by a fear that as the spawning of cheap labor slackens through scientific birth control, capitalism and the church will both lose their exploitational base. Be this as it may, avoid the "safe period" method of birth control if you would not come to grief.

Crockett Johnson

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Parade in Boston

ROBERT FORSYTHE

IN TALKING about American cities, one is bound to generalize and likely to be wrong. The impression a visitor gets of Philadelphia, for instance, may be entirely at odds with what the more conscious Philadelphian feels about his own town. At a venture, I should say that Philadelphia was dumb and reactionary and Washington was simply bewildered. But about Boston, there can surely be no doubt. It is the most aggressively ignorant, blackly reactionary city in America.

In the face of these well-established facts, the choice of Boston for the tryout of *Parade,* the Theatre Guild satirical revue, was a historical decision, if not a form of suicide. Practically speaking, the Guild was furnishing its Boston friends with the last play of its subscription course for the year. If the intention was to offer the attraction to the audience most likely in America to resent it, Boston was the ideal spot. There were two reactions possible: (a) The audience would love it or (b) the audience would hate it. If the audience loved it, the authors of what was to be a left-wing revue could proceed in a single file to the River Charles and jump in. If the audience hated it, that would not be news, unless it were bad news for the Guild box office. In brief, *Parade* couldn't win in Boston.

The opening night was something to remember. The lobby of the Colonial Theatre was crowded as early as eight o'clock by ladies and gentlemen patently invented by Peter Arno. Where they had been resting since the surrender at Yorktown is something I will probably never learn. The mere recital of the gowns of the ladies is not enough and it was done far better in next day's reviews by the Boston critics. In some way it was necessary to probe into the minds of these amazing people who were taking part in a social occasion reminiscent of the Russian Ballet in its most notable days. New York, with its scattered aristocracy and its infiltrations of groundlings, has nothing to compare with it. What Boston was doing was showing the flower of Back Bay at its bravest. The nature of *Parade* had been well advertised in advance. It was a radical revue and for one who had known radical plays only at the Civic Repertory theatre in New York, the presence of these gleaming shirt fronts and diamond dog collars was not so much astonishing as frightening. If they were expecting to be amused, they had obviously not reflected upon what a radical revue could do to them. If they were coming to be insulted, they were indulging in a form of self-punishment which bordered on perversion.

For a time it would have been impossible for a neutral critic to determine the mood of the audience. From the balconies and from the standees lining the rail at the rear of the orchestra seats, there was a burst of enthusiasm which seemed to carry the house along with it. The Jackass sketch which had to do with the resentment of the farmers at the A.A.A. policy of destroying crops brought a roar from both the left-wingers and right-wingers. Some inkling of how the show was going with the dog-collared ladies could be seen in the presence of a woman near the rear of the orchestra. From the time she seated herself and turned her thin-lipped visage toward the stage, no emotion showed on her face. She sternly disapproved of everything that went on before her. Her mouth was set in a hard, thin line and her eyes never wavered. But for the rest, there were no obvious signs that the Back Bay Lords and Ladies were having a bad time.

Just when it appeared that it was never going to be possible to read the minds of these sophisticated, worldly, cultured people, a change occurred in *Parade* itself. Instead of the satirical material, something different appeared on the stage. As is always true at opening nights, the performance was long. It was now almost 11:30 and the last numbers were coming on. Originally, I understand, it had been the intention of the authors of the revue that the numbers I am about to speak of should be the finale of the first act, but the Guild had routined the first night's performance so that they were to close the show.

The first was *Letter to the President,* a powerful number sung by Avis Andrews, a colored girl. It told of the share croppers who had been promised that the New Deal would solve their troubles and of what the Roosevelt policies had actually done to them. That was followed immediately by *Newsboy* and it was now that the Boston upper-class soul began to reveal itself. *Newsboy* is not new to workers audiences, but it was new to Boston society. Not only was it new, but it constituted a kick in the face. They were interested enough in the exciting beginning of the number, with its cries of the newsboys and the swirling of characteristic figures around a street corner. When it came to the passages of the hungry boy asking for money enough for a meal, the Boston audience began to rustle and make the uncomfortable and distressed protests common to a group which is hearing something it hates and is too polite to answer back. By the time the sequence was reached where the colored boy is beaten down and from the darkened stage come first the whispers and then the importunate questions . . . "Tortured . . . Framed . . . Electrocuted . . . Murdered . . . Have you heard of Sacco and Vanzetti? . . . Framed . . . Electrocuted . . . Have you heard of Scottsboro? . . . Have you heard of Tom Mooney? . . . Tortured . . . Framed . . ." something physical had happened to the nice folk of Back Bay. Ex-Governor Fuller of Massachusetts, who had refused the last pleas for Sacco and Vanzetti, arose at this point and left the theatre. From the rest of the orchestra came an ominous rumbling sound, the distinct roar of the mob —in this case a high-class mob. They had reached the point where they could stand no more. Every soft feeble fibre was being outraged by something which they would protest was dearer to them than life itself: Truth. They couldn't stand truth when it wasn't their kind of truth. They didn't care to have Sacco and Vanzetti and the Scottsboro boys and Tom Mooney recalled to them. When it seemed that they could stand no more, *Newsboy* ended on the words: *"Have you heard! Have you Heard!"* and the show came to a close with the rousing militant number *No Time to Sing a Gay Song Now.* . . . In short, it's time to fight, time to make a better life, time to take the world away from such people as these in the orchestra seats.

There were cheers from the balconies and from the standees behind the rail, but there were no cheers from the people who were drawing their opera cloaks about them and flipping out their top hats preparatory to departure. The pressure after the opening was so great that *Newsboy* and *No Time to Sing a Gay Song* had to be taken out of the show. Whatever happens in New York (the opening occurs too late for a review to appear in this week's NEW MASSES), the Theatre Guild can always remember the time it opened *Parade* in Boston. If it should run long enough in New York to warrant a further road tour, I am prepared to offer my services in mapping an itinerary. It will have, to begin with, an initial week in Washington under the auspices of the National Security League and Hamilton Fish, Jr. After that it will sail immediately for an unlimited run in the chapel at the Vatican in Rome.

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The Theatre

NEAR Philadelphia last week, in the tiny Hedgerow Theatre, I saw two "American Tragedies" where only one was scheduled. One was Erwin Piscator's dramatization of Dreiser's famous novel as staged by Jasper Deeter. The other was Deeter.

Jasper Deeter is a theatre artist whose name, like Piscator's in pre-Nazi Germany, should be honored and whose work should be seen by large sections of the revolutionary working class, with whom he has been in sympathy for years. Instead, in order to keep his theatre alive to present plays he believes in, Deeter is forced to present pap like *Happy Ending* and *Spring in Autumn* before audiences composed for the most part of idle rich "patrons" from the great estates which surround Hedgerow. This is an American tragedy that will not be remedied until Jasper Deeter leaves the isolation of Hedgerow and identifies himself completely with the great revolutionary audience that has never heard of him but is waiting nevertheless to welcome his work.

Piscator has fashioned Dreiser's novel into a powerful propaganda play against capitalism, and Deeter's clear, class-conscious production of *An American Tragedy* makes it one of the most straightforward, uncompromising revolutionary plays ever staged in this country. From the time the Narrator begins by proclaiming that "this tragedy is as natural as the opposition of the classes," Deeter never permits the audience to forget the real forces that move Clyde Griffiths to betray his fellow-workers, his sweetheart Roberta and his own innately decent character as he pursues the American Dream of success to the very shadow of the electric chair.

Clyde Griffiths is always seen in the No Man's Land between the classes, which are always arranged in sharp contrast to each other. While the workers are slaving below, the upper level of the small stage shows the rich Griffiths taking it easy in their offices. While Clyde and Roberta work together or pursue their forbidden love below, the rich Griffiths act out their sheltered, luxurious, empty lives above. The workers are given simple, direct and unaffected bearing in contrast to the stylized, stiff and pretentious mannerisms of the idle rich. Deeter gets marvelous performances out of the young Hedgerow actors.

Not only two levels are used, for Deeter is a resourceful director who knows how to make full use of the stage. In the Christmas-eve scene, for example, after Clyde breaks his promise to be with Roberta in order to attend a party with his rich acquaintances, he is shown being fitted into a dress suit in an imaginary store in the center of the stage. Meanwhile, unemployed workers on the left sing "Pie in the Sky" while, on the right, the pious sing "Silent Night." As Clyde leaves the "store" to climb to the level on high where the rich are dancing and making merry, the workers stop him and tell him they are starving while he buys evening clothes. He breaks away and joins his wealthy friends while the workers' song of protest against starvation drowns out the holy song and breaks into the world above.

An American Tragedy is class war set upon the stage by a first-rate artist who belongs to the theatres of the working class.

HERBERT KLINE.

Other Theatre Notes

When the New Theatre of Philadelphia, after six months of preparation and a stirring, victorious fight against censorship, finally presented its first play, *Too Late to Die* by Christopher Wood, the audience was prepared to see a fine revolutionary work. Unfortunately, the play suffers from weaknesses common to early workers-theatre plays. It has an unwieldly carry-all plot. The characterization is slight. There is present always the tendency to substitute expository conversation and story telling for dramatic images and action. Wood tells rather than dramatizes the story of Chester Jones, an incredibly naïve unemployed machinist who, after a series of harrowing experiences finally learns what it's all about and becomes a radical. As the story is unfolded in twenty scenes (which would have dragged terribly if not for Lem Ward's ingenuity in keeping the production moving smoothly) we realize that *Too Late to Die* is a good play in the making that suffers from having been born too soon. How it ever got beyond the New Theatre studio, with such a fine revolutionary play as *Waiting for Lefty* available, is a mystery. The acting was unusually good in the mass scenes.

"National Theatre Week" will be celebrated with the presentation of seventeen new revolutionary plays. On Saturday, May 25, the Theatre of Action will give a special opening preview of *The Young Go First,* their new full-length play of C.C.C. camp life, at the Park Theatre. John Howard Lawson will speak after the performance.

On Sunday, May 26, the Group Theatre will present Art Smith's new play *The Tide Rises,* a drama of the West Coast general strike, at the Belasco. In addition, Jimmy Savo, star comic of *Parade,* will preside as Master of Ceremonies and will give several feature numbers. The Dance Players, an experimental group in coordinating drama and dance, will apear in *Protest.*

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, May 27, 28 and 29: lectures on creative problems of the theatre arts by M. Gorelik, M. Solatorov, Anita Block, Lee Strasberg and Herbert Kline.

The conference will culminate with the competitions of fifteen New Theatre League groups in new plays at the Manhattan Lyceum, 66 East 4th Street, New York on May 31 and June 1. Information may be had at the New Theatre League, 114 West 14th Street, New York.

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The Screen

The Informer

THOSE horrible years of British Imperialism and Civil War in Ireland (1920-23) serve as background for John Ford's latest film, *The Informer* (R. K. O.). It is based on Liam O'Flaherty's ten-year-old novel of the same title. Within its box-office limitations it is one of the best things to come from Hollywood and is Mr. Ford's most mature film. As a result of these limitations the film is conceived as pure melodrama (as in Fritz Lang's *M*, which seems to have influenced *The Informer* a great deal) at the expense of reality and true tragedy.

The film concentrates its attentions on Gypo Nolan, a degenerate and dull-witted giant, ex-member of a revolutionary group who is in love with a prostitute, Katie. Gypo "informs" on his pal, Frankie McPhillip, a leading member of the rebel group, who is wanted for murder by the Black and Tans (the British troops during the Irish Revolution). Mr. Ford gives Gypo the sentimental motivation of wanting the twenty pounds reward in order to take him and his girl to America. However, with the money in his pocket, Gypo feels pretty cocky and begins to squander it. Most of the film deals with Gypo's wanderings from pub to pub to brothel, with the organization trailing him. Finally Gypo is tried in the illegal "People's Court" and sentenced to death (the outstanding sequence of the film). He escapes and hides in Katie's room. Katie unwittingly gives him away (the worst part of the film and the closest to the Hollywood tradition) and he is finally shot.

Although O'Flaherty's novel doesn't give a clear-cut picture of the Irish Revolution, since the author's paramount interest is analyzing adventurers, degenerates and psychopathics rather than social forces in the book, one doesn't lose the social scene entirely. And while a film-maker can't include everything in the novel one does expect that the essence, the richness of the background, the social scene which would make the characters alive and dynamic, be integrated as a part of the film. Ford uses Irish history merely as a backdrop and as a result his characters are just so much light and shadow on celluloid.

He has changed the time of the story from the Civil War to the period of the British intervention which is evaded anyway. This change is partly explained by his class bias and by the fact that the film would have been more difficult to produce the other way. It would have necessitated a revolutionary approach. He would have had to show that Frankie McPhillip was not wanted by the Black and Tans, but by the police of the Republic; that he was accused of killing a union official during one of the many agricultural uprisings; that Katie the prostitute was not the conventional bad woman who innocently betrays her lover, but a former factory worker and also ex-member of the revolutionary organization who was expelled for public prostitution and unreliability; that although she was chock full of dope she didn't hesitate to give up her lover (Gypo) who had turned stoolpigeon; that the people of Dublin were much more concerned with their economic problems; that the farmers were in revolt against the new Republic; that Frankie and his father (a bricklayer and an ex-Socialist) symbolized the political struggles between the Communists and the Reformists. It would have been an honest, stirring and vital film, and a terrific indictment of British Imperialism and of the present corrupt Irish "Free State." And it would have lasted longer than a week at (even) the Music Hall.

None of us is so naive that we expect such a film from Hollywood. But it is important to recognize that *The Informer* is about the closest Hollywood will ever come to producing a film with living human beings in it. After all John Ford is in a privileged class among directors; he is also a producer which gives him a certain amount of immunity from the Hollywood machine. Other directors wouldn't dare, wouldn't get the opportunity to do as good a film, with all its romantics, as *The Informer*.

PETER ELLIS.

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Art

Joe Jones

COMMUNISM, as we all know, is imported. While Hearst calls for the mobilization of the country's armed forces to repel the Red Menace at the city's gates, Thomas Benton talks and writes columns of words to prove that Communism is so utterly foreign to the American temperament that it cannot possibly take hold here—at least not in the Middle West. Unfortunately for the Bentons, Cravens and other varieties of jingoists, the red virus seems to crop up everywhere. Right in the heart of this same Middle West, for instance. This supposedly immune section of the country, which should by their theories breed only good staunch unquestioning patriots, turns up a Joe Jones.[1]

Born and reared in St. Louis, Jones learned the trade of house painter from his father, and at the age of fourteen was helping to support himself and his family. He earned his living as a journeyman painter until "enforced leisure" provided him with more time to devote to study and painting (he has never had an art school training). Jones is no new-comer to the art world. Although quite young (twenty-six), he is well known in the Middle West, where his original talent has been recognized in numerous prizes, awards and mural commissions. He attracted wide attention about a year ago for his "Court-House" mural, a collectively-planned-and-executed work which aroused a storm of protest from St. Louis's reactionaries, who tried to evict him and his class from their working quarters.[2] Particularly did they resent his insistence upon fair treatment of and no discrimination against Negroes, numbering about half the class. Jones and his co-workers had to fight off vigilante gangs bent on destroying the mural and beating up the artists. By arousing various workers' organizations (Unemployed Councils, John Reed Club, Y.C.L., etc.) to their defense they were able to defeat the local fascists. Jones has come by his Communism as naturally as he has come by the normal heritage of the average worker, manual or intellectual, today—that is, through insecurity, unemployment, class justice and the terrific struggle for existence. His art is a living expression of his participation in this struggle and grows organically out of the environment and the people he knows. Meyric Rogers, director of the St. Louis Art Museum, has described it succinctly in the foreword to the catalog:

> He paints what he has lived with and among and knows in so living.

The stuff of America is deep in these pictures. Jones loves his country and his people, and has written his feeling for them into honest paintings. You will find here none of the slick waxen lies of a Grant Wood prettying up the Middle West in overmantel pictures for drawing rooms. When Jones paints a landscape it is a straightforward, honest observation ("Red Earth," "Wheat"). But he does not stop at simply giving a faithful visual report. It is when he adds a class-conscious mind to a trained hand and eye, that he achieves his most significant expression. It is in his portrayals of the important aspects of the life of his people, the working class, that we find the measure of Joe Jones. In his impressive panel "The New Deal" he has strikingly dramatized the meaning of the N.R.A. for the workers. (Compare this architectonic composition with the St. Vitus-like chaos which pervades the form and content of Benton's murals.) "Roustabouts" has a fine mural quality, and achieves dramatic intensity from the excellent characterization—a skillfully conceived portrayal of Negro exploitation. Anyone who knows the Mississippi levee will recognize the truth of this pictorial statement. (Again, compare this painting with Benton's patronizing attitude toward the Negro, whom he views as a picturesque "native," in his crap-shooters, holy-roller meetings, etc.) In "Demonstration" and "We Demand," Jones has given effective expression to the increasingly militant fight of the organized working class. Particularly in the latter, I believe, he has created one of the most powerful canvases in the whole group. Plastic distortion is used so skillfully here (it is hardly noticeable at first glance) that one is struck by an increasing intensity of the total effect.

In this group of splendid paintings Jones gives eloquent testimony to the growing vitality of revolutionary art, which is as inexhaustibly fertile as the working mass of humanity, from which it stems and derives sustenance.

STEPHEN ALEXANDER.

[1] A. C. A. Gallery, 52 West 8th St., New York.
[2] See article by Orrick Johns, "St. Louis Artists Win," in March 6, 1934 issue of THE NEW MASSES.

Between Ourselves

ANNOUNCEMENT of the prize winner and publication of the prize essay in the Students' Essay Contest will be made in THE NEW MASSES next week. The prize, $100, was contributed by Ruth Fitch Boyd, in memory of her husband, Thomas Boyd. Corliss Lamont, Henry Hart and Granville Hicks were the judges in the contest, which closed May 10.

A special five-week course in Current Events, sponsored by the Friends of the Chicago Workers School and the Friends of NEW MASSES, is being held every Friday night 7 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. (May 17 through June 14) at the Chicago Workers School, 505 S. State Street. Hugo Folliard is the instructor.

New Masses Lectures

Friday, May 24—A. B. Magil, "The Truth About Father Coughlin," 8:00 P.M., Hillhouse High School, New Haven, Conn. Auspices: New Haven Branch American League Against War and Fascism.

Friday, May 24—Michael Gold, "Culture Under Fascism," 8:30 P.M., 683 Allerton Ave., Bronx, N. Y. Auspices: Allerton Workers Club.

Sunday, May 26—A. B. Magil, "I Interview Father Coughlin," 8:30 P.M., 1813 Pitkin Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y. Auspices: American Youth Club.

Wednesday, May 29—A. B. Magil, "Truth About Father Coughlin," 8 P.M. High School of Commerce, State St., Springfield, Mass. Auspices: American League Against War and Fascism.

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